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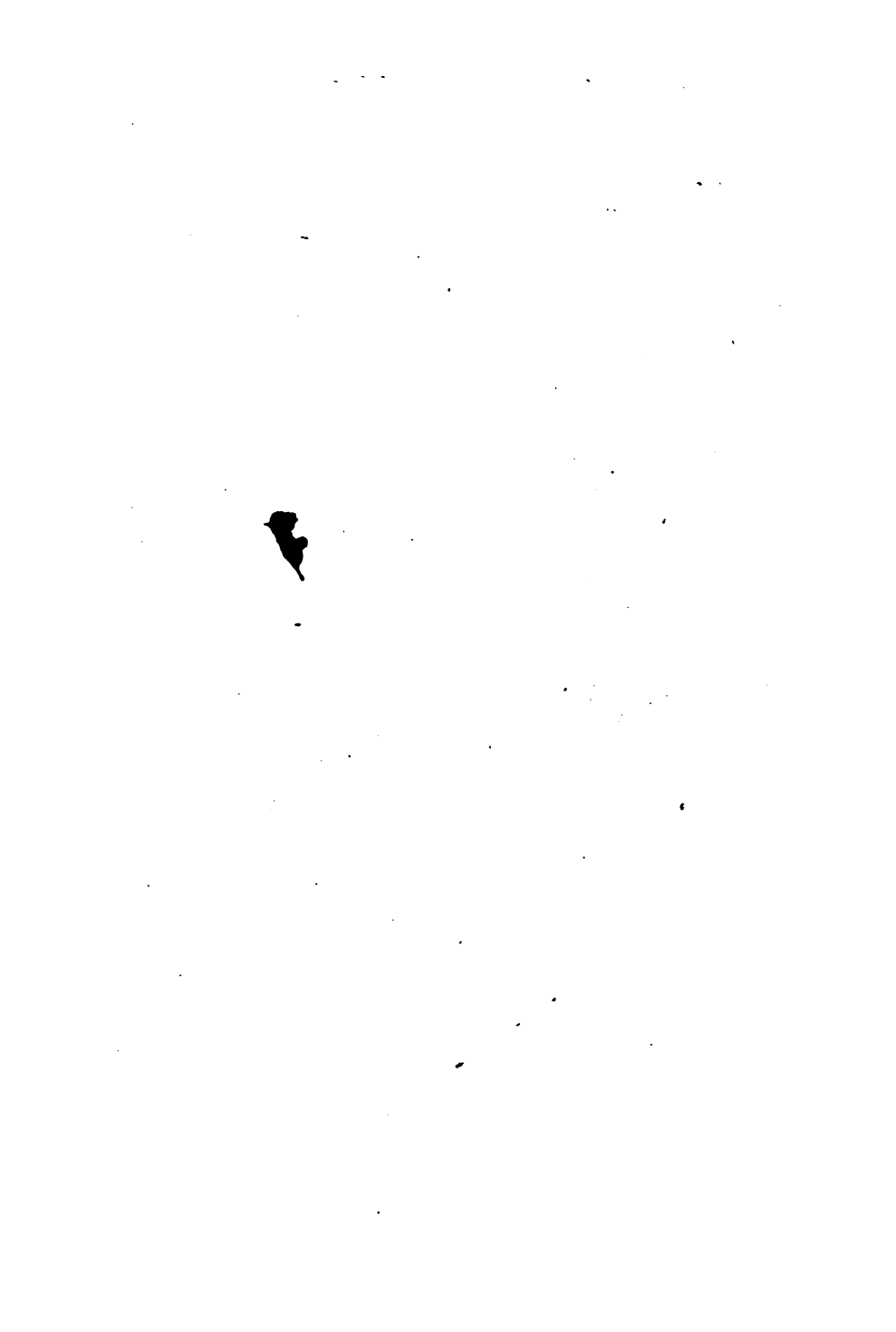
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St. Doulough's Church.

Archæologia Hibernica.

**A HAND-BOOK
OF
IRISH ANTIQUITIES**



PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN:

ESPECIALLY

OF SUCH AS ARE EASY OF ACCESS

FROM

The Irish Metropolis.

BY WILLIAM F. WAKEMAN.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.



DUBLIN:

JAMES M^cGLASHAN, 21 D'OLIER-STREET.

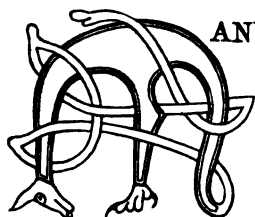
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TO
GEORGE PETRIE, LL.D., R.H.A., V.P.R.I.A.,
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND
AND PUPIL,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.



ANY as are the political jealousies among the Irish, there are few true natives of the soil who would not resent any charge of coldness or indifference to the welfare of their country, or of *wilful* ignorance upon the subject of her history or antiquities, which might be urged against them. Yet most of our travelled countrymen are better acquainted with the appearance of the Rhine than with that of the Shannon; with the windings of the Thames than with those of the Boyne; their knowledge of these Irish rivers being probably just so much as may be acquired out of a school geography, while they have steamed down the

Thames, and visited the chief points upon the Rhine.

We may venture to say that in like manner there are, even among our Tipperary gentry, many better skilled in the fortifications of the Rock of Gibraltar, than in the exquisite monuments of ancient Irish piety and art remaining upon the Rock of Cashel, in their own county; many who, in England, Scotland, Wales, and upon the Continent, have sought mountain air and scenery, while the Galtees, the Reeks, and the sublime range of the Mourne Mountains, had never cost them a thought. It would be at least out of place, in a volume such as we now present, to trace to its source this feeling, or rather want of feeling, by which so many Irishmen are ruled. It must be granted that Ireland,—though generally rich in every point attractive to the tourist, whether the mere pleasure-seeker or artist, antiquary or geologist,—has generally been described by book-makers as a country wherein, if indeed a man might pass in safety, he would still suffer so much from want of accommodation, &c., that, unless he possessed

some presence of mind, and a considerable taste for the ridiculous, his time and talents had better be employed elsewhere. These writers were, almost without exception, strangers to the country, men whose knowledge of the Irish, previous to their visit, appears to have been derived from the Stage, whereon it was, and perhaps still is, the fashion to represent us as marvellously fond of fighting, drinking, bulls, blunders, and superstition. Our neighbours appear to have been greatly amused with these representations, and with ballads and other publications which tended to shew Irish men and manners in the same light; and as the "*squireens*," who form a numerous class in Ireland, and indeed too many of the gentry, were accustomed to adopt this cant, even when it tended to their own discredit,—because they deemed it more aristocratic, in proportion as it pointed against the "mere Irish,"—a very general disregard of everything Irish arose, and has continued, though in a decreasing degree, even to our own days. Happily there is a sign of better times. The easy and rapid communication which has been estab-

lished between the two islands; and the spread of information among the Irish,—the former by bringing enlightened strangers to our shores, where they can judge for themselves, and the latter by raising the people in the social scale,—have caused misrepresentation to become more dangerous to an author's reputation, or at least less profitable. The subject of Irish Antiquities has latterly excited considerable attention, not only in Ireland, but even in countries beyond the limits of the British empire. Much has been done already, yet much more remains to be done. It is not sufficient to have shewn that Ireland contains an unbroken series of monuments, many of them historical, which lead us back, step by step, to a period long before the conversion of her people to Christianity,—to have formed museums,—to have translated other annals and manuscripts relating to her history and antiquities;—a feeling should be awakened in the breasts of the people generally, to preserve with scrupulous care the numerous remains of early Irish art with which the country abounds, and which frequently, in local history,

form our only records. The anxiety which the various governments of Europe, even the most despotic, evince for the preservation of their antiquities, shows how widely their importance is recognised.

In the following pages the author does not promise his readers any very wonderful discoveries, any startling facts. He has contented himself with describing the various remains as they are to be found, prefixing to each chapter some observations relative to the era, peculiarities, and probable or ascertained uses of the particular class of monument to which it is devoted. The volume, it is hoped, may be useful to the educated antiquary, as well as to the student,—to the former as a guide, directing his attention to many remains of great interest, of most easy access from the metropolis, and hitherto either altogether unnoticed, or described in books of the existence of which he may have no knowledge, or of which he may not with ease be able to procure copies; to the latter, in like manner, as a guide, and also as containing information not merely of the locality wherein he

may find studies. To the Council of the Irish Archæological Society the author is indebted for permission to use the beautiful capital letters which head the chapters, and which were originally engraved for the publications of the Society. The majority of them are from the Book of Kells, an Irish MS. of the sixth century, but some are of a later date. The thanks of the author are also due to Mr. John O'Donovan for many valuable suggestions, by which the book has been materially benefited; to Mr. Robert Gabbett, of Limerick, from whose sketches, made upon the spot, the engravings of the interesting ruins on Bishop's Island have been copied; to the Warden and Fellows of the College of Saint Columba, and to the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, for the free access which was granted him to many objects of antiquarian interest preserved in their museums; and to Mr. George Hanlon, of Rathgar, an artist of whose excellence as an engraver it is unnecessary here to speak.

December 15, 1847.

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ERRATA.

Page 62, line 5, *for antiquities read remains.*

— 63, — 3, *for as read in.*

— 86, — 4, *for nasal, read nasal.*

— 122, — 9, *for western read eastern.*

ARCHÆOLOGIA HIBERNICA.

INTRODUCTION.



THE antiquarian student, upon arriving in Dublin, the metropolis of a country more remarkable, perhaps, than any other of the West of Europe for the number, the variety, and, it may be said, the *nationality* of its ancient remains, is referred by the guide-books, to our two Cathedrals, the Castle, and perhaps one or two other structures in the city, or its immediate vicinity, for the exercise of his favourite study. In the subjects alluded to (the Castle, which is but a name, excepted), he finds only tolerable examples of a style of architecture which is by no means characteristic of Irish remains generally; and which appears never in this country to have attained the same degree of magnificence for which, in England and elsewhere, it

is so remarkable. At the same time, we have, within easy access from Dublin, examples, many of them in a fine state of preservation, of almost every object of antiquarian interest to be met with in any part of the kingdom. Sepulchral tumuli,—several of which, in point of rude magnificence, are perhaps unrivalled in Europe,—stone circles, cromlechs, pillar stones, and other remains of the earliest period of society in Ireland, lie within a journey of less than two hours from our metropolis.* The cromlechs of Kilternan, Shanganagh, Howth, Mount Venus, and of the Druid's Glen, may be reached almost in a morning's walk from Dublin; and a railway journey of seventy minutes, from the Dublin Terminus of the Drogheda Railway, with a drive of about four miles, will give the student of Irish antiquities an opportunity of viewing at Monasterboice, among other remains, two crosses, the most grand and beautiful, not only in this country, but, perhaps, in Christendom. So numerous are the monuments, even of a period antecedent to the first Danish invasion of Ireland, lying within a few hours' journey of the metropolis, that it would be tedious and

* We are happy to direct the stranger's attention to what must prove to him a very interesting little volume, entitled "Dublin and its Environs," published by James M^cGlashan, 21, D'Olier-street, and containing notices of many remains lying within a short distance from the City. It appeared after the above had been written.

unnecessary to notice them all; a judicious selection will answer every purpose of the student. In order to make the subject more clearly understood, we shall classify the various remains under three heads, viz.: I. Pagan, embracing those which, upon the best authority, are presumed to have been erected previous to, or within a limited period after the introduction of Christianity in the fifth century; II. The Early Christian, including the Round Towers; and III., the Anglo-Irish. Under the head of Anglo-Irish we shall class such structures as were erected during a limited period subsequent to the English invasion, and which, though often of Irish foundation, appear generally to have been built upon Anglo-Norman or English models. The remains which may be considered of the Pagan era consist of cromlechs, stone circles, tumuli, forts, raths, &c. &c. They are found in considerable numbers, particularly in the more remote parts of the kingdom, where, from the thinness of the population, and the absence of any modern "*improvement*," they have been suffered to remain unmolested, save by the hand of time. The immediate neighbourhood of Dublin, for obvious reasons, is less rich in antiquities of this class than of the others; but the railways afford ready access to several most interesting specimens. Of monuments of early Christian architecture we have numerous examples, no fewer than

five Round Towers lying within a short distance of the city. Of the early churches of Ireland, churches of a period when "the Scottish (Irish) monks in Ireland and Britaine highly excelled for their holinesse and learning, *yea sent forth whole flockes of most devout men into all parts of Europe,*"—see Camden's *Hibernia*, p. 67,—there are specimens in a state of preservation sufficient to give a good idea of architecture, in what may be considered its second stage in Ireland. The remains which we shall notice under the head Anglo-Irish consist of castles, abbeys, town-gates, &c. &c. The great lords who, in the time of Henry the Second or of his immediate successors, received grants of land from the Crown, would necessarily erect fortresses of considerable strength and extent, the more securely to preserve their possessions from the inroads of the native Irish, with whom they were usually at war. The castles of Trim, Malahide, Howth, Carlow, and a host of others, are silent witnesses to the fact, that the early invaders of Ireland were occasionally obliged to place some faith in the efficacy of strong walls and towers, to resist the advances of their restless neighbours, who, for many centuries subsequent to the invasion, were rather the levellers than the builders of castles. Of the massive square keep, so common in every part of the kingdom, our neighbourhood furnishes several examples. As,

except in some minor details, they usually bear a great resemblance to each other, an inspection of one or two will afford a just idea of all. They were generally used as the residence of a petty chief, or as an out-post dependent upon some larger fortress in the neighbourhood. Many appear to have been erected by English settlers, and they are usually furnished with a bawn, or enclosure, into which the cattle were driven at night, a precaution very significant of the times. Our abbeys, though frequently of considerable extent and magnificence, are in general more remarkable for the simple grandeur of their proportions. The finest exhibit many characteristics of what in England is called the "transition style;" but early pointed is also found, and in great purity. There are in Ireland but few notable examples of the succeeding styles. Decoration, indeed, was not so great a desideratum as strength and security; and we do not want the evidence of annals, to shew that our abbeys had occasionally to stand upon their defence, as bartizans surmount the doorways of several.

Having now introduced our readers to the subject generally, we propose to give an illustration of several of the more remarkable specimens of each class, pointing out their various characteristics, and in every case referring the reader to the original.

The greatest degree of care has been exercised, in

order to give *faithful* representations of the various remains, and of their details: with very few exceptions, the original sketches have been made upon the spot by the author, and afterwards transferred to wood by him, and the greater portion of the subjects were never before engraved.



PART I.

PAGAN ANTIQUITIES.

CHAPTER I.

CROMLECHS.

THEIR GENERAL CHARACTER.—TOMB IN PHENIX PARK.—CROMLECHS OF HOWTH, KILTERNAN, DRUID'S GLEN, MOUNT VENUS.



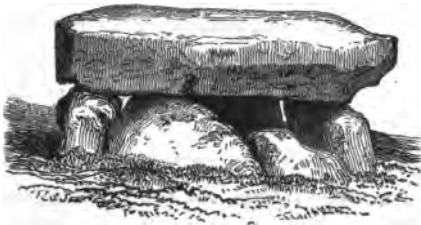
CROMLECH, when perfect, consists of three or more stones unhewn, and generally so placed as to form a small enclosure. Over these a large stone is laid; the whole forming a kind of rude chamber. The position of the table, or covering stone, is generally sloping; but its degree of inclination does not appear to have been regulated by any design. Cromlechs are occasionally found within the area of stone circles, as "The Broadstone," County of Antrim. They have also been discovered beneath tumuli and cairns. Without attempting to enumerate the theories brought for-

ward by antiquarians of this and other countries, relative to the mode and purpose of their erection, we shall simply state, that, from the fact of sepulchral urns, containing portions of calcined bones, and, in some instances, of entire human skeletons, having been discovered in connexion with several, these monuments appear to have been sepulchres. As to their probable era, it can only be said that they belong to some period prior to the introduction of Christianity into this island; and, as structures perfectly similar are known to exist in many parts of the world, even in the heart of India, we have no reason to suppose that some of them, at least, may not be memorials of a period when these islands had but lately received their earliest colonists. The ancient sepulchre situated in the Phoenix Park, a little to the west of the Hibernian School, was discovered in the year 1838 by some workmen employed under the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, in the removal of an ancient tumulus which measured in circumference one hundred and twenty, and in height fifteen feet. During the progress of the work, four stone kists (*Kistvaens*), each enclosing an urn of baked clay, within which were calcined bones, ashes, &c., were found. The annexed wood-cut represents one of these urns, which was fortunately saved in a nearly perfect state by Captain Larcom, of the Royal Engineers,

who happened to arrive at the place shortly after the discovery. It is now in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy. When the workmen had come upon the tomb, the works were stopped at the request of Captain Larcom, in order that a deputation from the Academy might assemble on the spot for the purpose of collecting and reporting upon facts relating to the discovery. The tomb at present consists of seven stones set in the



Cinerary Urn.



Tomb in Phoenix Park.

ground in the form of an irregular oval, three of which support a table, or covering stone, which measures in length six feet six inches; in breadth, at the broadest part, three feet six inches; and

in thickness between fourteen and sixteen inches. The spaces between the stones which formed the enclosure were filled with others of smaller size, which, since the discovery, have fallen out or been removed. The following is an extract from the report of the Academy: "In the recess thus enclosed, two perfect male human skeletons were found, and also the tops of the femora of another, and a single bone of an animal, supposed to be that of a dog. The heads of the skeletons rested to the north, and as the enclosure is not of sufficient extent to have permitted the bodies to lie at full length, they must have been bent at the vertebræ, or at the lower joints. In both skulls the teeth are nearly perfect, but the molars were more worn in one than in the other. Immediately under each skull was found collected together a considerable quantity of small shells common on our coasts, and known to conchologists by the name of *Nerita littoralis*. On examination these shells were found to have been rubbed down on the valve with a stone, to make a second hole, for the purpose, as it appeared evident, of their being strung to form necklaces; and a vegetable fibre, serving this purpose, was also discovered, a portion of which was through the shells. A small fibula of bone, and a knife, or arrow-head, of flint, were also found."

It is greatly to be regretted that a monument so

well calculated, at some period,—perhaps not far distant, when the Irish people, as a body, shall see in their antiquities something more than curiosities,—to awaken a desire in the minds of those who may visit it for further instruction, should be suffered to remain a prey to every wanderer in the Park desirous of possessing a “piece of the tomb,” in order to shew it as a wonder; and if steps be not taken to preserve this most interesting remain from the hands of such plunderers, it is likely, ere long, to suffer the fate of other monuments presently to be adverted to.

HOWTH CROMLECH.

The number of stones composing the cromlech of Howth is ten, including the table, a huge quartz block, of irregular form, measuring from north to south eighteen, and from east to west nineteen and a half feet. Its extreme depth is eight feet. The weight of this enormous mass appears to have been too great for the stones upon which it was placed to bear; and as they all have an inclination more or less towards the east, it is quite evident that the pressure gradually forced them from an upright position, till, bearing particularly upon a stone, which lies broken in two, the whole assumed its present dilapidated appearance. This cromlech, which must have been originally one of the finest

in the country, stands almost in a line between the ruined church of St. Fenton and the castle of



Howth Cromlech.

Howth, at a distance of about half a mile from the latter; and, since the formation of the railway, is most easy of access from Dublin.

KILTERNAN CROMLECH.

This cromlech, which is commonly called "The Giant's Grave,"* stands upon the side of a hill, a

* In reference to the name of this monument it should be observed, that the cromlechs are known in the south-east of Ireland by the very appropriate name of Giants' Graves, or Beds; while in the north and west they are called Beds of Dermot and Graine, *Leaba Diarmada agus Graine*, from a legend very current through the country of their having been erected by Dermot O'Duibhne, with whom Graine, the wife of Finn Mac Cool, eloped. Finn set out in pursuit of them, but

short distance to the north-west of the ancient church of Kilternan, and about half a mile from the Golden Ball, a village six miles from Dublin, upon the Enniskerry Road. From its enormous size, and perfect condition, it may be looked upon as one of the most striking monuments of its class remaining in Ireland. The covering stone, which rests upon six supporters, varying in height from two to four feet, measures in length twenty-three



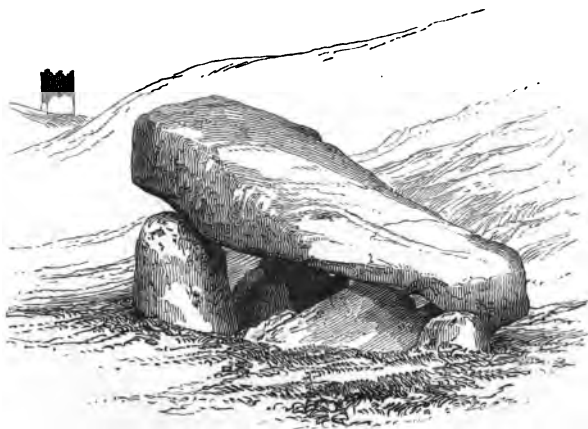
Kilternan Cromlech.

feet six inches, in breadth seventeen, and in thickness six feet six inches, extreme measurement.

the fugitives escaped for a year and a day, during which time they slept not in the same bed for more than one night. Hence the number of these in Ireland was 366, according to this legend.

DRUID'S GLEN CROMLECH.

A similar monument in the Druid's Glen, near



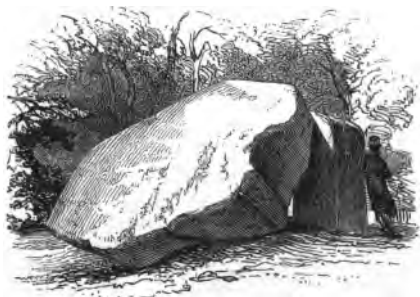
Druid's Glen Cromlech.

the village of Cabinteely, though of smaller size, is still a fine example.

MOUNT VENUS CROMLECH.

Upon Mount Venus, a hill situate about two miles and a half beyond Rathfarnham, in the county of Dublin, are the remains of a cromlech, the table-stone of which, like that of Howth, has slipped from its original form, and altered the relative position of its parts. This stone, which is of

granite, is in length nineteen and a half, in breadth eleven and a half, and in thickness nearly five feet. Of the stones which appear to have been supporters,



Mount Venus Cromlech.

two only retain their upright position; of these the greater measures in height eight, and in circumference nineteen feet.

SHANGANAGH CROMLECH.

We cannot conclude our notice of this class of monuments without making some mention of the very interesting example remaining at Shanganagh, near the village of Loughlinstown, and not far from the ancient church of Killiney. Though inferior in size to several which we have already described, its dimensions are considerable; and as it remains, to all appearance, in its original state, the student will find in it an object well worthy of his attention.

The covering stone measures in length nine, in breadth seven, and in thickness three and a half



Shanganagh Cromlech.

feet, and is supported upon four stones. The highest part of the pile is nine feet above the level of the adjoining field.

CHAPTER II.

PILLAR STONES.

STONE AT NEWGRANGE.—OGHAM STONES.—PERFORATED PILLAR STONES.



MANY parts of Ireland, and particularly in districts where the stone circles occur, may be seen huge blocks of stone, which evidently owe their upright position, not to accident, but to the design and labour of an ancient people. They are called by the native Irish Gallauns, or Leaganns, and in cha-

racter they are precisely similar to the hoar-stones of England, the hare-stane of Scotland, and the maen-gwyr of Wales. Many theories have been promulgated relative to their origin. They are

supposed to have been idol-stones,—to have been stones of memorial,—to have been erected as landmarks, boundaries, &c.,—and lastly, to be monumental stones. The subject of the illustration is one of several remaining in the neighbourhood of the tumulus of Newgrange — (see page 21). It measures nine feet in height, and in circumference sixteen. A similar stone in the village of Ballynacraig (*i. e.*, Rock Town), to which it probably gave its name, about half a mile from New-



Standing Stone near Newgrange.

grange, measures twenty-four feet in circumference, but its present height above the ground is only about six feet. There are monuments of a similar class adjoining the residence of Mr. Grierson, in the valley of Glanismole, about four and a half miles from Dublin. Several of the Irish pillar stones bear inscriptions in the Ogham character, a species of writing supposed to have been in use in this country previous to the introduction of Christianity, but which is occasionally found upon re-

mains of a period long subsequent to the fifth century. As an example of this kind of writing we engrave a portion of an ancient pillar stone, upon which the characters are marked very distinctly. It is preserved in the Museum of Trinity College, and originally stood in the county of Kerry, where stones so inscribed are numerous. Perforated stones, very similar to the ordinary pillar stone, are found in many parts of Ireland, Scotland, and even, as appears from Mr. Wilford's Asiatic Researches, in India. Abroad, as well as at home, their origin is shrouded in the deepest obscurity, nor is it likely that the subject can ever be elucidated.



Ogham Stone in Trinity
College, Dublin.

CHAPTER III.

SEPULCHRAL MOUNDS, CAIRNS, ETC.

MODES OF INTERMENT PRACTISED BY THE PAGAN IRISH.—CINERARY
 URNS.—TUMULUS AND SEPULCHRAL CHAMBER OF NEWGRANGE.—
 MOUND OF DOWTH, AND ITS SEPULCHRAL CHAMBERS.—STONE BASIN.
 —MOUND OF RATHMULLAN.—BEE-HIVE CHAMBER.—ANCIENT ENCLO-
 SURE.



HE pagan Irish appear to have made use of two modes of sepulture, viz., by interring the body whole, in a horizontal or perpendicular position, and by cremation. In the latter prac-

tice, when the body had become sufficiently calcined, the ashes were placed in an urn of clay or stone, which was then deposited within an artificial chamber formed of large uncemented stones, over which it was the custom to raise a cairn, or an earthen mound. Cinerary urns, however, have been found within the area of stone circles, and frequently in the plain ground, simply enclosed in a small kist, or turned mouth downward upon a

slate. They have also been found in tumuli, not many feet from the surface; even in mounds that, in their centre, contained other, and probably much more ancient deposits. In cases of interment, the grave appears generally to have been formed of large flat stones placed edgewise, and enclosing a space barely sufficient to contain the body; over these similar stones were placed, the whole lying a little beneath the surface of the earth. The cromlech appears to have been but a larger kind of tomb.

A most interesting account of burial in an upright position is referred to in the Book of Armagh, where King Loeghaire is represented as telling St. Patrick that his father Niall used to tell him never to believe in Christianity, but to retain the ancient religion of his ancestors, and to be interred in the hill of Tara, like a man standing up in battle, and with his face turned to the south, as if bidding defiance to the men of Leinster.

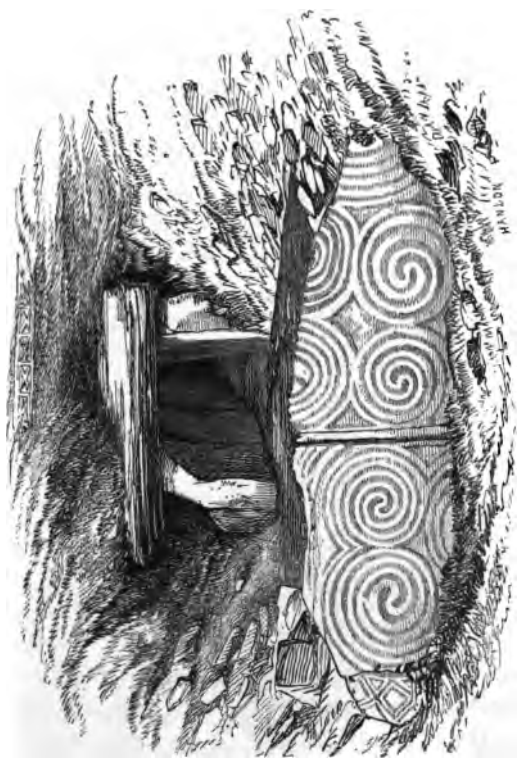
NEWGRANGE MOUND, OR CAIRN.

The cairn of Newgrange, in the county of Meath, lying at a distance of about four miles and a half from Drogheda, is perhaps, without exception, the most wonderful monument of its class now existing in any part of western Europe. In one point, at least, it may challenge comparison with any Celtic monument known to exist, inasmuch as

the mighty stones of which its gallery and chambers, of which we shall speak hereafter, are composed, exhibit a profusion of ornamental design, consisting of spiral, lozenge, and zig-zag work, such as is usually found upon the torques, urns, weapons, and other remains of pagan times in Ireland. We shall here say nothing of its probable antiquity, as it is anterior to the age of alphabetic writing; and indeed it would be in vain to speculate upon the age of a work situate upon the banks of the Boyne, which, if found upon the banks of the Nile, would be styled a pyramid, and perhaps be considered the oldest of all the pyramids of Egypt. The cairn (see wood-cut No. 1), which even in its present ruinous condition measures about seventy feet in height, from a little distance presents the appearance of a grassy hill partially wooded; but upon examination, the coating of earth is found to be altogether superficial, and in several places the stones, of which the hill is entirely composed, are laid bare. A circle of enormous stones, of which eight or ten remain above ground, anciently surrounded its base; and we are informed that upon the summit an obelisk, or enormous pillar stone, formerly stood. The opening represented in the cut No. 2, was accidentally discovered about the year 1699 by labouring men employed in the removal of stones for the repair of a road. The gallery, of which it is the



No. 1.—The Cairn of Newgrange, from the East.



No. 2.—Mouth of the Passage leading to the Chamber within the great Cairn of Newgrange.

external entrance, extends in a direction nearly north and south, and communicates with a chamber or cave nearly in the centre of the mound. This gallery, which measures in length about fifty feet, is at its entrance from the exterior four feet high, in breadth at the top three feet two inches, and at the base three feet five inches. These dimensions it retains, except in one or two places where the stones appear to have been forced from their original position, for a distance of twenty-one feet from the external entrance. Thence towards the interior its size gradually increases, and its height, where it forms the chamber, is eighteen feet. Enormous blocks of stone, apparently water-worn, and supposed to have been brought from the mouth of the Boyne, form the sides of the passage; and it is roofed with similar stones. The ground plan of the chamber is cruciform, the head and arms of the cross being formed by three recesses, one placed directly fronting the entrance, the others east and west, and each containing a



Ornament on the Roof of the eastern Recess.

basin of granite. The sides of these recesses are composed of immense blocks of stone, several of which bear a great variety of carving, supposed by some to be symbolical. The engravings represent various characteristic selections from the work upon the roof of the eastern recess, in the



Ornament on the Roof of the eastern Recess.

construction and decoration of which a great degree of care appears to have been exercised. An engraving upon a stone forming the northern external angle of the western recess is supposed to be an inscription; but, even could any satisfactory reading of it be given, its authenticity is doubtful, as it has been supposed to have been forged



Supposed Inscription.

by one of the many dishonest Irish antiquaries of the last century. The same stone upon its eastern face exhibits what appears to have been intended as a representation of a fern or yew branch. An ornament, or hieroglyphic, of a similar character, was found within an ancient Celtic tomb at Locmariaker, in Brittany,—see *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. p. 233. It is a very remarkable fact that the majority of these carvings must have been executed before the stones upon which they appear had been placed in their present positions. Of

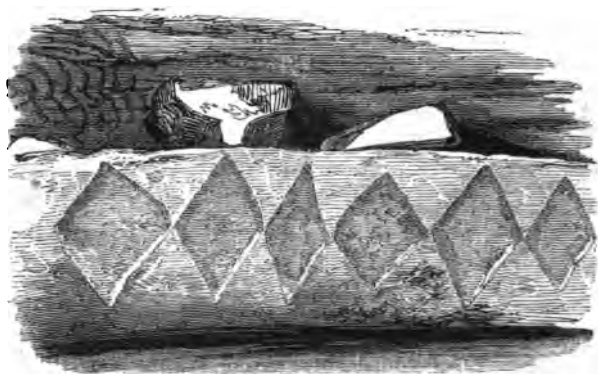


Carving on a Stone in the western Recess.

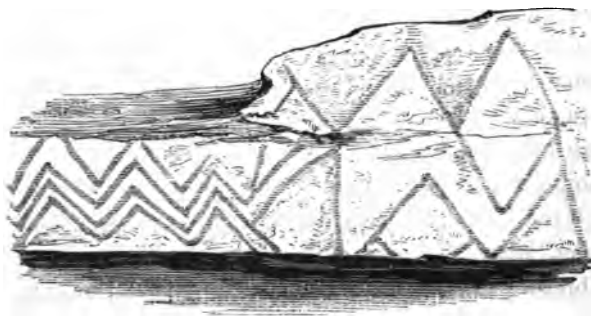
this there is abundant evidence in the eastern recess, where we find the lines continued over portions of the stones which it would be impossible now to reach with an instrument, and which form the sides of mere interstices.

The cuts marked 3 and 4 represent some decora-

tions of a very peculiar character which appear upon the sides of the eastern recess.



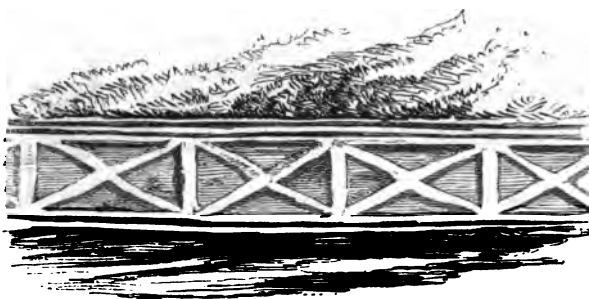
No. 3.—Carved Stone in the eastern Recess.



No. 4.—Carved Stone in the eastern Recess.

No. 5 represents a stone now lying upon the

surface of the mound, a little above the opening described in page 22.



No. 5.—Carved Stone upon the Exterior of the Mound.

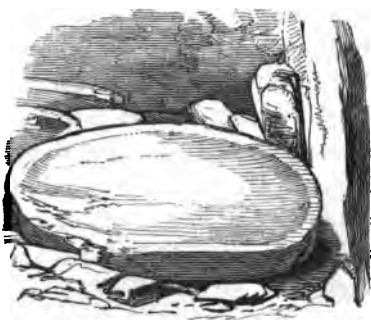
The lower portions of the walls of the chamber are composed of large uncemented stones, placed in an upright position, over which are others laid horizontally, each course projecting slightly beyond that upon which it rests, and so on, until the sides so closely approximate that a single stone suffices to close in and complete the roof, which, in its highest part, is twenty feet above the present level of the floor. The length of the passage and chamber, from north to south, is seventy-five, and the breadth of the chamber, from east to west, twenty feet. Of the urns or basins contained in the various recesses, that to the east is the most remarkable. It is formed of a block of granite, and appears to

have been set upon, or rather within, another, of somewhat larger dimensions. Of its form the annexed wood-cut will give a just idea. Two small circular cavities have been cut within its interior, as represented above; a peculiarity not found in either of the others, which are of much ruder construction, and very shallow. Subjoined is a representation of the basin in the western recess.



Stone Basin in the eastern Recess.

In the neighbourhood of the Newgrange tumulus are two other monuments of the same class, and of an extent nearly equal: the "Hills" of Nowth and Dowth, or, as they are called by the Irish, Cnoabh and Dubhath; the former lying



Stone Basin in the western Recess.

about one mile to the westward of Newgrange, and the latter, of which the subjoined is an illustration, at a similar distance in the opposite direction.



Sepulchral Mound or Cairn of Dowth, from the South.

Of the internal arrangement of this huge cairn, little, until very recently, was known beyond the fact that it was different from that of the monument last described, inasmuch as, instead of one great gallery leading directly towards the centre of the pile, there appeared here the remains of two passages in a very ruinous state, and completely stopped up, neither of which, however, seemed to have conducted towards a grand central chamber. The Committee of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy

having, in the course of last autumn (1847), obtained permission from the trustees of the Netterville Charity, the present proprietors of the Dowth estate, to explore the interior of the tumulus, the work was commenced and carried on, at considerable cost, under the immediate direction of Mr. Frith, one of the county engineers. It should be observed that, from the difficulty of sinking a shaft among the loose, dry stones of which this hill, like that of Newgrange, is entirely composed, Mr. Frith, in order to arrive at the great central chamber which was supposed to exist, adopted the plan of making an open cutting from the base of the mound, towards its centre. The first discovery was that of a cruciform chamber, upon the western side, formed of stones of enormous size, every way similar to those at Newgrange, and exhibiting the same style of decoration. A rude sarcophagus, bearing a great resemblance to that in the eastern recess at Newgrange, of which we have given an illustration in page 30, was found in the centre. It had been broken into several pieces, but the fragments have all been found, and placed together, so as to afford a perfect idea of its original form. In clearing away the rubbish with which the chamber was found nearly filled, the workmen discovered a large quantity of the bones of animals in a half-burned state, and mixed with small shells.

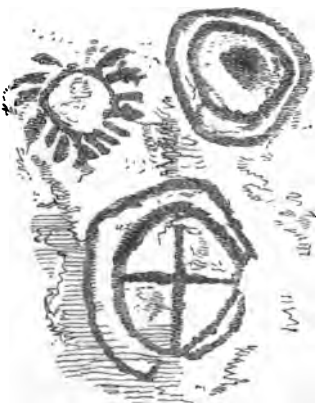
A pin of bronze and two small knives of iron were also discovered. With respect to instruments of iron being found in a monument of so early a date, we may observe, that in the Annals of Ulster there occurs a record of this mound, as well as of several others in the neighbourhood, having been searched by the Northmen of Dublin as early as A. D. 862, "on one occasion that the three kings,



Mouth of the Passage leading to the Chamber at Dowth.

Amlaff, Imar, and Ainsle, were plundering the territory of Flann, the son of Coaing;" and it is an interesting fact that the knives are precisely similar,

in every respect, to a number discovered, together with a quantity of other antiques, in the bog near Dunshaughlin, and which there is reason to refer to a period between the ninth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. Upon the chamber being cleared out, a passage twenty-seven feet in length was discovered, the sides of which incline considerably, leading in a westerly direction towards the side of the mound, and composed, like the similar passage at Newgrange, of enormous stones, placed edgeways, and covered in with large flags. The chamber, though of inferior size to that at Newgrange, is constructed so nearly upon the same plan, that a description of the one might almost serve for that of the other. The recesses, however, do not contain basins, and a passage



extending in a sou- No. 1. Carving on a Stone at Dowth.
therly direction, communicating with a series of small crypts, forms here another peculiarity. A huge stone, in height nine, in breadth eight feet, placed between the northern and eastern recesses, is re-

markable for the singular character of its carving.—
See cut .No. 1.

A portion of the work upon this stone bears great resemblance to Ogham writing.—See p. 19. A sepulchral chamber, of a quadrangular form, the stones of which bear a great variety of carving (among which the cross, a symbol which neither in the old nor the “*new*” world can be considered as peculiar to Christianity, is conspicuous), has been discovered upon the southern side of the mound. Here, as elsewhere, during the course of excavation, the workmen found vast quantities of bones, half-burned, many of which proved to be human; “several unburned bones of horses,* pigs, deer, and birds, portions of the heads of the short-horned variety of the ox, and the head of a fox.”† They also found a star-shaped amulet of stone, a ring of jet, several beads, and some bones fashioned like pins. Among the stones of the upper portion of the cairn were discovered a number of globular balls of stone, the size of small eggs, which Dr. Wilde supposes probably to have been sling-stones. Up to the time of our writing, no other chambers have been

* At Rathmullan, in the county of Down, similar bones, mixed with cinders and charcoal, and covered over with an earthen mound, occur.

† See Dr. Wilde’s interesting paper on the Boyne, in the Dublin University Magazine for December, 1847.

found ; but as the works are still in progress, further discoveries may yet be made ; and even now the gentlemen of the Academy may feel that their undertaking has been most successful. A double circle of stones appears, anciently to have surrounded this cairn. Of these the greater number lie buried, but in summer-time their position, particularly after a long continuance of sun-



No. 2. Carving on Stone at Dowth.

ny weather, is shewn by the remarkably dry and withered appearance of the grass above them.

Among the trees between the mound of Dowth and the mansion are the remains of a small sepulchral chamber ; and a little to the east of the house the student will find a grand specimen of the ancient military encampment, or rath.

CHAPTER IV.

RATHS OR DUNS.

RATH AT DOWNPATRICK.—SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBERS.—HILL OF TARA.
 —RATH RIGH, OR KING'S RATH.—THE FORRADE.—TEACH CORMAC.—
 PILLAR STONE AT TARA.—MOUND OF THE HOSTAGES.—RATH GRAINE.
 —RATH CAELCHU.—POTHATH RATHA GRAINE.—THE BANQUETING
 HALL AT TARA.—THE LIS, OR CATHAIR.—STAIGUE FORT.—DUN
 AENGHUIS.



THE earthen duns, or raths, which are found in every part of Ireland, where stone is not abundant, often consist merely of a circular entrenchment, the area of which is slightly raised above the level of the adjoining land. But they most frequently present a steep mound, flat at the top, and strongly entrenched, the works usually enclosing a space of ground upon which, it is presumed, the houses of lesser importance anciently stood, the mound being occupied by the dwelling of the chief. The engraving represents the celebrated rath at Downpatrick, in the county of Down,

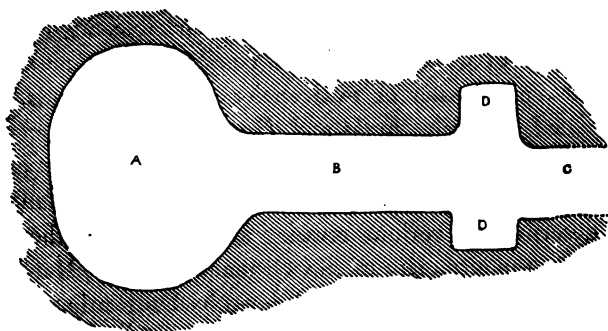
formerly called Rath Keltair, and will afford an excellent idea of the general appearance of the more



Rath of Downpatrick.

remarkable of these remains. Of the number of raths which we have examined, we have not in one instance known the mound to contain a chamber; but when the work consists merely of the circular enclosure, of which mention has been already made, excavations of a bee-hive form, lined with uncemented stones, and connected by passages sufficiently large to admit a man, are not unfrequently found. These chambers were probably used as places of temporary retreat, or as store-houses for corn, &c. &c., the want of any ventilation, save that derived from the narrow external entrance, rendering them unfit for the continued habitation of man. We are not aware that any rath in the neighbourhood of Dublin contains a chamber or chambers of

this kind. They are common only in the southern and western parts of Ireland; but subterraneous works, similar to those usually found in the forts of Connaught and Munster, occur in Meath, and perhaps in other Leinster counties. An excavation which was a few years ago accidentally discovered upon the grounds of P. P. Metge, Esq., in the vicinity of Navan, may be described as a good example.



Plan of a Subterraneous Chamber near Navan.

The chamber A is of an oval form, and measures in length eleven, in height six, and in breadth nine feet; B is a passage or gallery (in length fifteen feet), which has fallen in at C; D D are niches let into the sides of the gallery, which, like the chamber, is lined with uncemented stones, laid pretty regularly.

The celebrated hill of Tara, in the county of

Meath, from the earliest period of which we have even traditional history, down to the middle of the sixth century, appears to have been a chief seat of the Irish kings. Shortly after the death of Dermot, the son of Fergus, in the year 563, the place was deserted, in consequence, as it is said, of a curse pronounced by Saint Ruadan, or Rodanus, of Lorha, against that king and his palace. After thirteen centuries of ruin, the chief monuments for which the hill was at any time remarkable, are distinctly to be traced. They consist, for the most part, of circular or oval enclosures, and mounds, called in Irish, *Raths* and *Duns*, within or upon which the principal habitations of the ancient city undoubtedly stood. The names by which we shall describe the various remains are given altogether upon the authority of the Ordnance Survey Map, upon which they were laid down by Dr. Petrie and J. O'Donovan, Esq., after a very careful study of several ancient Irish documents, in which were found most minute descriptions, occasionally accompanied by plans, of the various monuments as they existed previously to the twelfth century.

The rath called *Rath Righ*, or *Cathair Crofinn*, appears anciently to have been the most important work upon the hill, but it is now nearly levelled with the ground. This rath, which is of an oval form, measures in length, from north to south,

about 850 feet, and appears in part to have been constructed of stone. Within its enclosure are the



The Forradh.

ruins of the *Forradh*, a mound, of which the annexed engraving is an accurate representation, and of *Teach Cormac*, or the House of Cormac. The mound of the *Forradh* is of considerable height, flat at the top, and encircled by two lines of earth, having a ditch between them. In its centre is a very remarkable pillar stone, which formerly stood upon, or rather by the side of a small mound, lying within the enclosure of *Rath Righ*, and called *Dumha-na-*



Pillar Stone at Tara.

n-Giall, or the Mound of the Hostages, but which was removed to its present site to mark the grave of some men slain in an encounter with the King's troops during the rising of 1798.

It has been suggested by Dr. Petrie, that it is extremely probable that this monument is no other than the celebrated Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, upon which, for many ages, the monarchs of Ireland were crowned, and which is generally supposed to have been removed from Ireland to Scotland for the coronation of Fergus Mac Eark, a prince of the blood-royal of Ireland, there having been a prophecy that in whatever country this famous stone was preserved, a king of the Scotie race should reign. Certain it is, that in the MSS. to which Dr. Petrie refers (the oldest of which cannot be assigned to an earlier period than the tenth century), the stone is mentioned as still existing at Tara; and "it is an interesting fact, that a large obeliscal pillar-stone, in prostrate position, occupied, till a recent period, the very situation on the hill pointed out as the place of the Lia Fail by the Irish writers of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries."

Dr. Petrie, after remarking upon the want of agreement between the Irish and Scottish accounts of the history of the Lia Fail, and on the questionable character of the evidence upon which the story

of its removal from Ireland rests, observes: "That it is in the highest degree improbable, that, to gratify the desire of a colony, the Irish would have voluntarily parted with a monument so venerable for its antiquity, and deemed essential to the legitimate succession of their own kings."

If the Irish authorities for the existence of the Lia Fail at Tara, so late as the tenth or eleventh century, may be relied upon, and their extreme accuracy in other respects is sufficiently clear, the stone carried away from Scotland by Edward the First, and now preserved in Westminster Abbey, under the coronation chair, has long attracted a degree of celebrity to which it was not entitled; while the veritable Lia Fail, the stone which, according to the early bardic accounts, *roared* beneath the ancient Irish monarchs at their inauguration, remained forgotten and disregarded among the green raths of deserted Tara.

The *Teach Cormac*, lying to the south-east of the *Forradh*, with which it is joined by a common parapet, may be described as a double enclosure, the rings of which upon the western side become connected. Its diameter is about 140 feet.

An inspection of these remains alone will give the student of Irish antiquities a very correct idea of the general character of the ordinary raths or duns, but as we shall suppose the reader to be upon

the spot, we strongly recommend an examination of the three raths called *Rath Graine*, *Rath Caselchu*, and *Fothath Ratha Graine*, lying upon the slope or the hill, to the north-west of *Rath Righ*. Rath Graine is said to have belonged to, and to have been named after, Graine, a daughter of King Cormac Mac Art, and the wife of Finn Mac Cumhaill, the Fingal of Mac Pherson's Ossian.

The ruins of *Teach Midhchuarta*, or the Banqueting-hall of Tara, occupying a position a little to the north-east of Rath Righ, consist of two parallel lines of earth, running in a direction nearly north and south, and divided at intervals by openings which indicate the position of the ancient doorways. These doorways appear to have been twelve in number (six on each side); but as the end walls, which are now nearly level with the ground, may have been pierced in a similar manner, it is uncertain whether this far-famed Teach-Midhchuarta had anciently twelve or fourteen entrances. Its interior dimensions, 360 by forty feet, indicate that it was not constructed for the accommodation of a few, and that the songs of the old Irish bards, descriptive of the royal feasts of Teamor, may not be the fictions that many people are very ready to suppose them. If, upon viewing the remains of this ancient seat of royalty, we feel disappointed, and even question the tales of its former magnificence, let us

consider, that since the latest period during which the kings and chiefs of Ireland were wont here to assemble, thirteen centuries have elapsed, and our surprise will not be that so few indications of ancient grandeur are to be found, but that any vestige remains to point out its site.

THE LIS, OR CATHAIR.

In order to afford the reader a clear insight into the character of Irish antiquities generally, it will be necessary to describe a class of ruins now remaining only in the more remote districts of Connaught and Munster. We allude to the stone *Cathair*, or, as it is sometimes styled, *Lis*, or *Dun*, which is found so commonly along the western and south-western coasts of Ireland, and upon the adjoining



Model of Staigue Fort.

islands. They probably owe their preservation to the abundance of stone in the districts where they

are generally found, the neighbouring inhabitants thus having no inducement to destroy them for the sake of their materials. The subjoined engraving represents a model which may be seen in the museum of the Royal Dublin Society House, of the cathair at Staigue, in the county of Kerry, probably the most perfect example of its class to be met with in any part of the south of Ireland. It consists of a circular wall of uncemented stones, about eighteen feet in height, and twelve in thickness, enclosing an area of eighty-eight yards in diameter. Upon the internal face of the wall are regular flights of steps—the plan of which will be best understood by a reference to the wood-cut—leading to the highest part of the building. The doorway is composed of large unhewn stones, and is covered by a horizontal lintel. A ditch, now nearly filled up, anciently defended the wall upon the exterior.

The fortress called *Dun Aenghuis*, upon the great island of Aran, in the bay of Galway, originally consisted of four barriers of uncemented stones, the spaces between the barriers or walls varying between 640 and twenty-eight feet, defended upon the exterior by a kind of "*chevaux-de-frise*," formed of large and jagged masses of limestone, set in the clefts of the rock upon which the fort stands. The inner barrier, which in some parts is ten feet in thickness, and twelve in height, and which in its

thickness contains a chamber capable of containing but two or three persons, is composed of three distinct walls of irregular masonry, lying close together, and apparently forming one mass. Upon the internal face of this triple wall are ranges of steps similar to those in Staigue fort. The external division rises several feet higher than the other portion, and forms a kind of breast-work, well adapted to cover the defenders of the fort from the missiles of assailants.

Several cathairs which we have examined are not circular in plan, but appear to have been formed to suit the contour of the eminence upon which they stand; and others are of an oval form. Small, circular, stone-roofed buildings, called *Clochans*, are commonly found within their enclosure; and similar structures, unconnected with any other work, are numerous in the counties of Galway and Kerry. Upon High Island, off the coast of Connemara, Inis Glory, off the coast of Erris, and upon other islands adjoining the western and south-western coasts of Ireland, are houses built upon precisely the same plan, which were evidently erected in connexion with ancient monastic establishments.

CHAPTER V.

STONE CIRCLES.

CIRCLES AT SLIEVE NA-GRIDDLE; AT LOUGH GUR; AT NEWGRANGE.—
 DRUID'S SEAT AND CIRCLE, KILLINEY.



TONE Circles of great magnitude are to be seen in many parts of Ireland. Of the lesser kind numerous examples occur in various counties, and particularly in the north. They are composed of rough, unhewn stones, varying in height from two to seven or nine feet above the level of the adjoining land, and, in some instances, are encompassed with a low earthen mound and ditch.

Their area, though usually unoccupied, is occasionally found to contain one or other of the following remains :

1. A cromlech, as at the "Broadstone," parish of Finvoy, county of Antrim.

2. A tumulus, or cairn, as at Newgrange, Dowth, and other places.

3. A smaller circle, or circles.

4. Stone pillars.

Human bones, cinerary urns, ashes, weapons of flint, &c., are almost invariably discovered upon the earth within these enclosures being disturbed. The urns are enclosed within small stone kists, and are rarely found at a greater depth from the surface than about one foot, or eighteen inches.

The avenue of stones by which some British circles appear to have been connected together, is



Circle on Slieve-na-Greidle.

rarely found in Irish remains of the same class. Indeed we only know of one instance in which

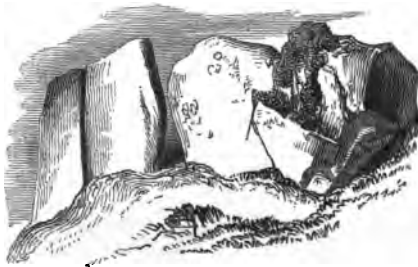
such a passage appears, and even there it cannot be traced to any great distance. It runs in a north-easterly direction from the circle upon Slieve-na-Greidle, or Griddle Mountain, near Downpatrick, in the county of Down. The stones of which it is formed are smaller than those of the circle, from which it extends to a distance of about thirty-five feet. The finest remains of the class under notice which we have seen in Ireland, lie near the shore of Lough Gur, at a short distance to the north of the little town of Bruff, in the county of Limerick. The stones which encompass the mounds of Newgrange and Dowth



Circle at Newgrange.

are generally very large, some of them measuring eight or nine feet in height. The en-

graving represents a portion of the circle at the former place, of which we have already given a description, see page 21. There are several minor circles in the same neighbourhood, but they are in a great state of dilapidation, and, with one exception, would scarcely repay the student for the time occupied in visiting them, particularly as the finer remains at Newgrange lie so close at hand.* A



Remains of the Circle at Dowth Hall.

noble circle, encompassing a cromlech, formerly stood upon Dalkey Common, but it has disappeared, the stones having been blasted and quarried by some public contractor, engaged in the erection of the Martello Tower near that place.† This

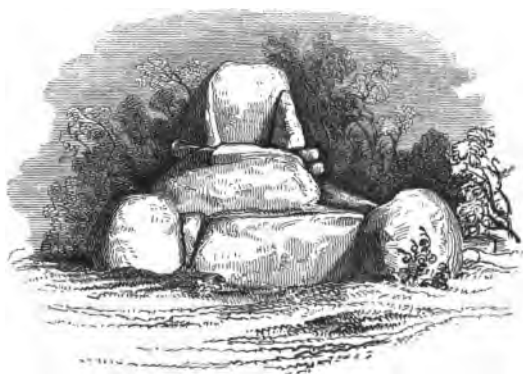
* The remains of a fine circle, or rather oval, lie a little to the east of Dowth Hall, to the left of the road from Drogheda. Many of the stones have been removed, but several of great size remain in their ancient position.—See engraving above.

† Dublin Penny Journal, vol. ii. page 308.

outrage occurred about the year 1797, when Dalkey was almost a desert. Since then scores of houses, walls, &c., have been built upon the common with the stone of the district, which is yet so abundant that material for the erection of a city might be removed, and hardly missed.

DRUID'S SEAT.

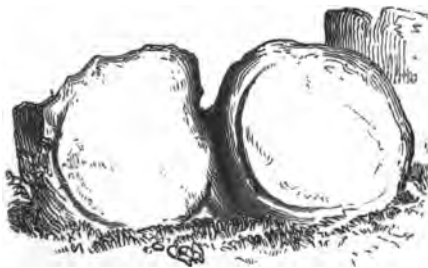
A singular pile of stones, popularly called "The Druid's Judgment Seat," stands near the village of Killiney, not far from the Martello Tower, upon the opposite side of the road. It was formerly en-



Druid's Judgment Seat.

closed within a circle of great stones, and a ditch. The former has been destroyed, and the latter so

altered that little of its ancient character remains. "The Seat" is composed of large, rough granite blocks, and, if really of the period to which tradition refers it, an unusual degree of care must have been exercised for its preservation. The stones bear many indications of their having been, at least, re-arranged at no very distant period. Small wedges have been introduced as props between the greater stones. The right arm is detached from the other part, to which it fits but clumsily. The whole, indeed, bears the appearance of a modern antique, composed of stones which once formed a portion of some ancient monument. One great evidence of its being a forgery consists in the position which it occupies near the eastern side of the enclosure, while the back of the seat is turned to-



Ancient inscribed Stone, Killiney.

wards the west, and towards the centre of the space anciently encompassed with the stone circle. The

following are its measurements: breadth at the base, eleven feet and a half; depth of the seat, one foot nine inches; extreme height, seven feet. Of several detached stones, standing within the enclosure, we have engraved one remarkable for the form into which it has been cut. It is a work probably coeval with the ancient circle, and symbolical of the sun and moon.

PART II.

EARLY CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES.



ONG had it been considered as an established fact, that the churches of Ireland, previously to the twelfth century, were altogether constructed of wood, or wattles daubed with clay; and that consequently there remained in the country not a single example of church architecture of a period much antecedent to A. D. 1148, in which year died Malachy O'Morgair, who is stated to have erected the first building of stone which had ever appeared in Ireland. The well-directed labours of one true antiquary,—who, leaving the beaten track of what was miscalled investigation, sought among our antiquities themselves for evidences by which their era might be determined, and in our hitherto neglected manuscripts, for notices

relative to such structures as were in use at the time of their composition,—have lately shewn how little a question, so interesting to every lover of Ireland, was understood, even by the most judicious writers of the many who had dwelt upon the subject.

With Dr. Petrie, indeed, rests the honour of having removed the veil of obscurity which had so long shrouded the subject of our ecclesiastical antiquities, and to have shewn that Ireland not only contains examples of church architecture of the earliest period of Christianity in the kingdom, but also that they exhibit many characteristics of unrivalled interest. Following Dr. Petrie upon a subject which he has taken so much care to elucidate, we could not hope to bring forward much new matter; and, even were it in our power to do so, the brevity of this volume would preclude more than a general sketch. We shall treat the subject broadly, pointing out the more striking features of what may with justice be styled our national architecture, but leaving its more minute, though not less interesting details, for the future study of any who may wish to pursue the inquiry.

CHAPTER I.

ORATORIES.

EXAMPLES IN KERRY.—THEIR SINGULAR CONSTRUCTION.—BEE-HIVE HOUSES.—ORATORY AND BEE-HIVE HOUSE (ON BISHOP'S ISLAND.—RUINS OF ST. FECHIN'S MONASTERY ON HIGH ISLAND.



BEFORE we describe the style of church usually found in connexion with our most ancient establishments, it will be well to devote a chapter to those very remarkable oratories, which, though few in number, and remaining only in a confined district of the south-western part of Munster, form among the early structures of Ireland a most interesting and important class. Dr. Petrie, in his work entitled "*An Inquiry into the Origin and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland*," has described and engraved the most beautifully constructed and perfectly preserved of those ancient structures now remaining. It stands near

Smerwick Harbour, in the county of Kerry, and measures externally forty-three feet in length, by ten in breadth; its height, to the apex of the roof, is sixteen feet. The building is composed altogether of uncemented stones, well fitted to each other, and is roofed by the gradual approximation of the side walls from their base upwards. A square-headed doorway, placed in the centre of the west gable, measures in height five feet seven inches, in breadth at the lintel, one foot nine inches, and at the base two feet four inches. The walls are four feet in thickness at the base. The eastern gable contains a small semicircularly-headed window, the

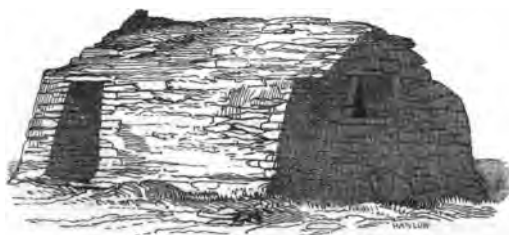


Bee-hive House on Bishop's Island.

arch being cut out of two stones. In connexion with the greater number of these remains are to be seen the ruins of small circular structures, which

appear to have been the habitations of the ancient ecclesiastics. A fine and hitherto unnoticed example occurs upon the rock called Bishop's Island, near Kilkee, upon the coast of Clare: it measures in circumference 115 feet. The exterior face of the wall, at four different heights, recedes to the depth of about one foot, a peculiarity not found in any other structure of the kind, and which was probably introduced with the view of lessening the weight of the dome-shaped roof, which was formed, not on the principle of the arch, but, as usual, by the gradual approximation of the stones as the wall ascended.

The annexed engraving represents the oratory adjoining, the erection of which is traditionally as-



St. Senan's Oratory.

cribed to Saint Senan, who lived in the sixth century, and whose chief establishment was upon Inis Cathaigh, or Scatterry Island, the Iona of the more

southern part of Ireland. It measures eighteen feet by twelve; the walls are in thickness two feet seven inches. The doorway, which occupies an unusual position, in the south side, immediately adjoining the west end wall, is six feet in height, one foot ten inches wide at the top, and two feet four inches at the bottom. The east window splays externally, and in this respect is probably unique in Ireland. Several large monumental pillar stones stand at a short distance from the church, in an easterly direction, but they bear no inscriptions or symbols.

The ancient recluses, or anchorites, appear to have selected the wildest and most dreary spots as their places of abode. Bishop's Island, or as it is styled in Irish, "*Oileán-an-Easpoig-gortaigh*," i. e. the Island of the hungry or starving Bishop, is a barren precipitous rock, environed with perpendicular or overhanging cliffs, about 250 feet in height. It contains about three-quarters of an acre of surface, to which access is most difficult, and only to be effected by a skilful climber, and after a long continuance of calm weather.

The island of *Ard-Oileán*, or High Island, off the coast of Connemara, upon which are several of these circular habitations, and a church erected by Saint Fechin in the seventh century, is perhaps equally difficult of access. The ruins are encompassed by

a wall or *caiseal* of uncemented stones, and occupy a position near the centre of the island.

Sheep, which in summer are sent hither from the mainland to graze upon the short sweet grass with which a great portion of the island is covered, and a few martins, are their only occupants. Indeed, such is the lonely and desolate character of the place, that even the very birds appear in some measure to have lost their instinctive dread of intruders; and at the time of our visit, in the summer of 1839, the ground was literally strewn with their eggs, laid upon a few twigs of heath, or upon withered grass or straw, which had been probably picked up from the surface of the sea.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCHES, ETC.

EARLY CHURCHES.—THEIR CHARACTERISTICS.—EXAMPLES AT KILLINEY AND KILTERNAN, COUNTY OF DUBLIN.—THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF GLENDALOUGH, COUNTY OF WICKLOW.—ST. KEVIN'S BED.—ST. COLUMB'S HOUSE AT Kells, COUNTY OF MEATH.



CREDIBLE as it may appear to those who have paid but slight attention to the subject of the ancient ecclesiastical antiquities of Ireland, it is nevertheless a fact that there now exist in this country some hundreds of churches, which, in point of antiquity at least, may be classed among the most remark-

able structures of Christian times now to be found in Europe. The remains of which we shall now speak carry with them incontestible evidence of their remote era. Their architectural features and

details are of such a character, that our surprise is not so great on account of their antiquity as *Christian* "Teampulls," as at their appearance in structures of an era so comparatively late, for they are often truly Etruscan.

Of their usual characteristics we shall here give a brief description, referring the reader who may desire more than a general sketch to Dr. Petrie's beautiful work, already mentioned, in which the subject has been fully discussed.

I. DOORWAYS.—Covered by a horizontal lintel, or headed with a semicircular arch, springing from plain, square-edged imposts. Occasionally the arch is cut out of a single stone. At Glendalough are examples in which the lintel is surmounted by a semicircular arch, the space between being filled up with masonry. The stones generally extend the whole thickness of the wall. Few of the very early doorways exhibit any kind of decoration beyond a plain projecting band, of which there are some fine examples at Glendalough. The door appears to have been placed against the interior face of the wall, as, in many instances, the stones, for a distance of about three inches from the angle, have been slightly hollowed, evidently for the reception of a frame.

II. WINDOWS.—Invariably small, and splaying internally; headed, generally, with small, semicir-

cular arches, either formed of several small stones, or cut out of a single large one ; but the horizontal lintel is common, as is also the triangular head. The sides of the windows, like the doorway jambs, almost invariably incline. They are rarely decorated, and then in the simplest manner, by a projecting band, similar to that occasionally found upon the early doorways, or by a small head.

III. CHOIR ARCH.—In the very ancient churches to which chancels are attached, the connecting arch is invariably semicircular, square-edged, and plain. It is usually formed of stones pretty equal in size, well hammered, and admirably fitted to each other. The greater number of the ancient Irish churches, however, have no chancel, their plan being a simple oblong.

IV. BELFRIES.—The “*Cloig-theach*,” or round tower, appears to have been the most usual belfry. The ancient structure at Glendalough, called St. Kevin’s Kitchen, supports upon its western gable a small tower which appears to have answered this purpose. Bell-turrets, properly speaking, were not common before the thirteenth century.

V. MASONRY.—Generally of very large stones, well fitted together, as in cyclopean work. In some of the oldest examples no mortar appears to have been used, but these instances are very rare

and mortar is generally found cementing enormous stones, but never in large quantities.

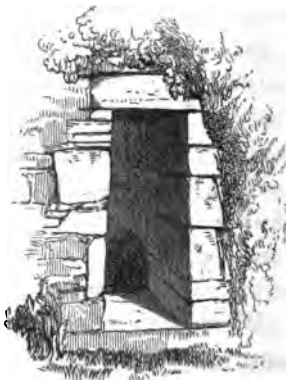
VI. ROOFS.—The roofs of most of the very ancient Irish churches have long disappeared, but several of stone still remain. Their pitch is exceedingly high, and they are generally constructed upon arches. Examples occur in St. Columb's house at Kells, in Cormac's Chapel at Cashel, in St. Kevin's Kitchen at Glendalough, and in a few other structures.

Such are the more usual and prominent characteristics of the early Irish churches. It should be observed, that the doorway, with few exceptions, is almost always found to occupy a position in the centre of the west end. The windows in chancelled churches are generally five in number: one in the eastern gable, and one in each of the side walls of the nave and choir.

We shall now direct the reader's attention to the most remarkable example in the immediate vicinity of Dublin, viz., the church of Killiney. This ruin is situated near the village of the same name, at a distance of about nine miles from the metropolis, and of two from the Terminus of the Kingstown and Dalkey Railway, and will be found particularly interesting to the student of Irish church architecture. Its extreme dimensions upon the interior are thirty-five feet, the nave measures but twelve feet and

eight inches, and the chancel nine feet and six inches, in breadth. The church originally consisted of a simple nave and choir, lighted in the usual manner, and connected by a semicircular arch, but at a period long subsequent to its original foundation, an addition, the architecture of which it will be well to compare with that of the more ancient building, has been made on the northern side.

The original doorway, which, as usual, is placed in the centre of the west gable, and of which we affix an illustration, is remarkable for having a cross sculptured upon the under part of its lintel. It measures in height six feet and one inch; in breadth at the top, two feet, and at the bottom, two feet four inches. The next feature to be noticed is the



Doorway of the Church of Killybeg, County Dublin.

choir arch. Its general style and form will be best explained by the sketch, which was taken from the north-east angle of the chancel. This, which may be looked upon as a most characteristic example of its class, measures in breadth, where the arch be-

gins to spring, four feet seven inches, and at the base, four feet ten inches and a half; its height is



Choir Arch of Killiney Church.

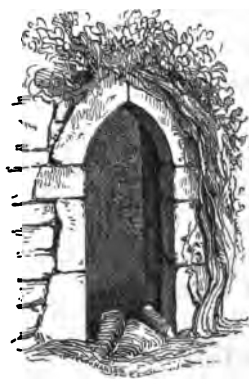
only six feet and a half. The chancel windows display the inclined sides, so indicative of antiquity when found in Irish ecclesiastical remains, but, with the exception of that facing the east, they are in a state of great dilapidation. The eastern window is square-headed, both within and without, and exhibits the usual splay. The comparatively modern addition on the northern side of the nave, which appears to have been erected as a kind of

aisle, is connected with the ancient church by several openings broken through the north side wall. It will be well to compare its architectural features with those of the original

structure. The doorway which is here represented offers a striking contrast to that in the west gable, and its eastern window is equally different from that in the ancient chancel, being larger, and chamfered upon the exterior. The fact of a semicircular arch-head being cut out of a single stone is of itself no proof of high antiquity, as it occurs in many comparatively

late structures in Ireland; and in England we recollect to have seen in the "*Perpendicular*" church of Kirkthorpe, near Wakefield, a door-head that exhibited this mode of construction.

The church of Kiltarnan, in the neighbourhood of which is the noble cromlech described in page 13, presents several features of considerable interest. The south side wall and the west gable are original, and of great antiquity. The latter contains a square-headed doorway, now stopped up



Pointed Doorway of Killiney Church.

with masonry; and to supply its place, a pointed doorway has been inserted in the south side wall. This alteration was made, probably, at the time of the re-erection of the eastern end, the style of which indicates a period not earlier than the close of the thirteenth century, about which time the custom of placing the doorway in the west end appears to have ceased. There are several other churches in the immediate neighbourhood of Dublin which contain features of very high antiquity, but they have been altered and remodelled at various times, and are, upon the whole, characteristic of later periods. Some of these we shall notice when describing the early pointed style, as found in Irish remains, confining our remarks for the present to such examples of the primitive ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland as are easy of access from Dublin.

The lone and singularly wild valley of Glendalough, in the county of Wicklow, lying at a distance of about twenty-four miles from the metropolis, presents a scene which, for stern and desolate grandeur, is in many respects unsurpassed. Huge, gloomy mountains, upon which clouds almost continually rest, encompass, and in some places overhang, the silent and almost uninhabited glen. Two little lakes, now appearing in the deepest shadow, now reflecting the blue vault, according as

the clouds above them come or go,—a winding stream, and grey rocks jutting here and there from out the heath,—form its natural features. A noble monastic establishment, round which a city subsequently rose, flourished, and decayed, was founded here in the early part of the sixth century by St. Kevin. The ruins of many ecclesiastical structures yet remain, and “the long, continuous shadow of the lofty and slender Round Tower moves slowly, from morn till eve, over wasted churches, crumbling oratories, shattered crosses, scathed yew trees, and tombs, now undistinguishable, of bishops, abbots, and anchorites.”* How few of the gay tourists by whom the glen is yearly visited view these ruins with any other feeling than that of idle and ignorant curiosity. Their ears have been poisoned with the burlesque and lying tales [inventions of the last half century] which the wretched men and women, miscalled guides of the place, have composed for the entertainment of the thoughtless. They wander unmoved among shrines which, nearly thirteen centuries ago, were raised in honour of their God by men joyous and thankful in the feeling of certain immortality,—men whose fathers in their youth had revered the Druid as a more than human counsellor.

* Rev. C. Otway.

That several of the existing churches formed part of the original foundation, their style of architecture sufficiently indicates.

The noble doorway of "the Lady's Church," a modern name, is, perhaps, the grandest of its kind remaining, and exhibits, in a striking degree, that early Greek form which is so very commonly found in the doorways and in other openings of our most ancient churches and Round Towers, and even, though more rudely developed, in the cathairs [cahers], and other Irish remains of the Pagan era.



Doorway of Lady's Church.

The remarkable building called St. Kevin's Kitchen, now, alas! sadly mutilated, is not the least interesting object in the group. Its high-pitched roof of stone remains in a perfect state. A doorway in the western gable displays an instance of the lintel surmounted by an arch. The chancel,

which a few years ago remained, though of great antiquity, and stone-roofed, appears to have been



St. Kevin's Kitchen.

an addition; and a portion of the ancient east window may still be observed in the wall, just above the head of the choir arch, which was not formed in the usual manner, but *cut out* of the masonry. The little tower upon the west end appears to be the earliest example of a belfry springing from a roof or gable; but this, as well as the sacristy, is of later date than the rest of the building.

Trinity Church, perhaps, in a greater degree than any coeval structure in Leinster, retains the original character of its various features. It possesses a

magnificent specimen of the square-headed doorway; a choir arch, of its period, certainly the finest in Ireland; chancel windows, with heads semicircular or triangular; in fact almost every characteristic of the most ancient style of church architecture in Ireland, and each perfect in its way.

In that singularly interesting ruin, styled the Monastery, are columns which, upon their capitals, exhibit ornamental sculpture of a style peculiar to monuments of the ninth and tenth centuries. These in England would be pronounced Norman, more particularly as the arch which they were designed to sustain displayed a variety of the zig-zag, or chevron moulding, as may be seen from several of its stones which yet remain.

The Refeart, or Royal Cemetery Church, though less imposing in its general appearance than several of the equally ancient remains in the more eastern part of the glen, is, on account of its association with the life of the founder, not surpassed in interest by any of the others.

In the cemetery of this (Refeart) church was preserved, a few years since, an ancient inscribed tombstone, popularly called King O'Toole's Monument; but it has disappeared, "the guides" having sold it in small pieces to tourists, scarcely less ignorant than themselves.

The large structure standing within the enclosure

of the cemetery, a little eastward from the Round Tower, is popularly styled "the Cathedral," and appears, from its name, dimensions, and position, to have been anciently the *Domhnach more*, or *Daimhliag-mor*, or chief church of the place. Notwithstanding its present state of dilapidation, there are in Ireland few structures of the same antiquity and extent that retain so many original features. The tower adjoining is one of the largest and most perfectly preserved now remaining. Its semicircular doorway-head, carved out of a single stone, may be looked upon as a good example of that peculiar mode of construction.

A *craicéal*, or wall, appears usually to have enclosed the greater number of the ancient Irish monastic establishments. That such a work anciently existed at Glendalough is certain, though scarcely a vestige of it at present remains above ground. One of the gateways, however, until very lately, stood in a nearly perfect state. It is described and engraved by Dr. Petrie, *Essay on the Round Towers*, page 447, and his prophecy that, for want of care, this monument, unique in its kind, would soon cease to exist, became half fulfilled last summer upon the fall of the principal arch.

We have but slightly glanced at the greater and more generally interesting ruins of this celebrated glen. It also contains numerous relics, such as

crosses, monumental stones, &c., which, by a visitor, should not be overlooked; but, as we shall have occasion to refer our readers to other and much finer remains of each class of antiquities which they represent, it would be at least unnecessary to describe them here. We may, however, mention the singular chamber called "St. Kevin's Bed." That it is altogether a work of art cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated. Though, to a certain degree, its artificial character is distinctly marked, it is quite possible that a natural cavity, the sides of which have been roughly hewn and squared, may have existed previously. The Bed, which is situate in an almost overhanging rock, at a considerable distance above the lake, is said to have been the residence of St. Kevin, when pursuing that course of study and contemplation for which his name, even to this day, is revered; and the celebrated Saint Laurence is said to have spent much of his time in prayer and heavenly contemplation in this cavern.

One of the earliest examples of cylindrical vaulting remaining in Ireland occurs in the structure called St. Columb's House at Kells, county of Meath. The arch, which is completely devoid of ornament, springs from the side walls, and separates the body of the building from a small croft, to which access was anciently gained by a quadrangular opening, about nineteen inches in breadth,

adjoining the west gable. Two walls, crossing and resting upon this arch, and pierced each with a small semicircular-headed doorway, together with the gables, support a roof of stone. The lower apartment was lighted by two windows, one in the

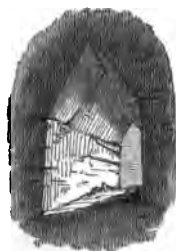


St. Columba's House at Kells, County Meath.

centre of the east end, the other in the south side wall. Both windows are small, and splay inwardly. That to the east is formed with a semicircular arch, while the other presents a triangular head. The ancient doorway which was in the west end has

been destroyed. St. Columb's House is supposed to have combined the purpose of an oratory with that of a habitation, and in this respect to class with St. Kevin's House or Kitchen at Glendalough, St. Flannan's House at Killaloe, and

one or two other structures. Whether we regard it as a habitation of the eminent ecclesiastic whose name it bears, or as a church, to which purpose this, in common with similar buildings, was certainly through many ages applied, it is a ruin of no common interest, and we strongly recommend such



Window in St. Columb's House.

of our readers as may have a day or two to spare, to visit Kells. The Round Tower adjoining, and the various crosses in the cemetery and in the market-place, afford severally an admirable study. The latter are inferior in size only to the beautiful remains at Monasterboice, of which notice will be found in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER III.

CHURCHES.

EARLY DECORATED CHURCHES.—CHURCH OF KILLESBIN.—EXAMPLES
AT RAHAN.—CORMAC'S CHAPEL AT CASHEL.



THE churches to which we have referred in the preceding pages are such as we have every reason to believe were generally constructed during the earlier ages of Christianity in this kingdom.

How long the style continued is a matter of very great uncertainty. The horizontal lintel appears gradually to have given place to the semicircular arch-head. The high-pitched roof becomes flattened, the walls lose much of their Cyclopean character, and in several examples a considerable quantity of cement appears to have been used. The windows exhibit a slight recess, or a chamfer upon the exterior, and are of greater size ; a small bead-moulding is occasionally found extending round an

arch upon the interior. The walls are generally higher, and of somewhat inferior masonry. As the style advanced, the sides of the doorways became cut into a series of recesses, the angles of which were slightly rounded off. The addition of a slight moulding, at first a mere incision, upon the piers, would seem to have suggested pillars. Chevron and other decorations, which in England are supposed to indicate the Norman period, are commonly found, but they are generally simple lines cut upon the face and soffit of the arch. Pediments now appear, and the various mouldings and other details of doorways and other openings become rich and striking, and, in some respects, bear considerable analogy to true Norman work. The capitals frequently represent human heads, the hair of which is interlaced with snake-like animals. A similar style of decoration is displayed upon the doorways of several of the Round Towers, as at Timahoe. The church of Killeshin, in the Queen's County, lying at a distance of about two miles from Carlow, appears to have been one of the most beautiful structures of this class ever erected in Ireland. Its doorway, until very lately, retained in a remarkable degree the original sharpness of its sculpture. We were informed that, about fifteen years ago, a resident in the neighbourhood used to take pleasure in destroying, as far as lay in his power,

the beautiful capitals here represented, and that to his labours, and not to the effects of time, we may



Capitals at Killeshin

attribute the almost total obliteration of an Irish inscription which formerly extended round the aba-



Capitals at Killeshin.

cus, and of which but a few letters at present remain. It appears that within the last half century

there has been a greater destruction of Irish antiquities, through sheer wantonness, than the storms, and frost, and lightning, of ages could have accomplished. Such acts of Vandalism have not been always perpetrated by the unlettered peasant. Indeed, the devotional feeling of the labouring classes of the greater part of Ireland leads them to regard antiquities, especially those of an ecclesiastical origin, with a feeling of veneration. These outrages have most frequently been committed by contractors for the erection of new buildings, for the sake of the stones, or, for the same reason, by men of station and education, who should have recollected that age and neglect cannot deprive structures once consecrated to God, and applied to the service of religion, of any portion of their sacred character. The church of Killeshin is, perhaps, late in the style. The arches [there are four concentric] which form the doorway display a great variety of ornamental detail, consisting of chevron work, animals, &c. &c. A pediment surmounts the external arch, and a window in the south side wall is canopied by a broad band, ascending and converging in straight lines. A window of similar construction appears in the Round Tower of Timahoe, already alluded to. The most remarkable specimen of this style of church remaining, occurs at Rahin, near Tullamore, in the King's County. It is most minutely described

and illustrated by Dr. Petrie in pages 240, 241 of the work to which we have so frequently alluded; and, as it appears from historical evidence to belong to the eighth century, there is, perhaps, no structure in the British Isles of greater interest to the archæologist. A triple choir arch, and a circular window, highly ornamented, are the only remaining features of the original church. The piers of the former are rounded off into semi-columns, with capitals of very singular character, totally distinct from Norman work. The bases are globular in form, and are sculptured in each compartment out of a single stone. The capitals or imposts are ornamented upon their angles with human heads, the hair of which is carried back, and represented by shallow lines cut upon the face of the stone in a very fanciful manner.



Window of Killeshin Church.

The window, which is seven feet six inches in diameter, is composed of stones unequal in size, and displaying chevron ornaments in very low relief.

It is a fact well worthy of observation, that the details which we have mentioned as characteristic of this style are never found associated with others known to belong exclusively to the Norman period;

and that in several structures, as in Cormac's Chapel at Cashel, an erection of the early part of the twelfth century, the usual Norman capitals, ornaments, &c. &c., appear. It is an interesting consideration, that, as the style of architecture usually denominated Norman was certainly practised in Ireland long previous to the English Invasion, there is a great probability that it was neither unknown nor unused in England before A. D. 1066, and that, consequently, many churches in that country, usually supposed to be Norman, may, in fact, be true Saxon works.

The railway now in the course of formation will soon bring Cashel within a few hours' journey of



Rock of Cashel.

the metropolis; and as the ruins upon the celebrated Rock are unparalleled, at least in Ireland, for picturesque beauty and antiqúarian interest, there are

few by whom a visit to the place would not be remembered with pleasure. Cormac's Chapel, which, with the exception of the Round Tower, is the most ancient structure of the group, was built by Cormac Mac Carthy, King of Munster, in the beginning of the twelfth century. It is roofed with stone, and in its capitals, arches, and other features and details, the Norman style is distinctly marked.

The plan is a nave and chancel, with a square tower on each side, at their junction. The southern tower is ornamented externally with six projecting bands, three of which are continued along the side walls of the structure; and it is finished at the top by a plain parapet, the masonry of which is different from that of the other portions, and evidently of a later period. The northern tower remains in its original state, and is covered with a pyramidical cap of stone. An almost endless variety of Norman decorations appear upon the arches and other features of the building, both within and without. Both nave and chancel are roofed with a semicircular arch, resting upon square ribs, which spring from a series of massive semicolumns set at equal distances against the walls. The bases of these semicolumns are on a level with the capitals of the choir arch, the abacus of which is continued as a string course round the interior of the building. The walls of both nave and chan-

cel beneath the string course are ornamented with a row of semicircular arches, slightly recessed, and enriched with chevron, billet, and other ornaments and mouldings. Those of the nave spring from square imposts resting upon piers, while those in the chancel have pillars and well-formed capitals. There are small crofts, to which access is gained by a spiral stair in the southern tower, between the arches over both nave and chancel, and the external roof. These little apartments were probably used as dormitories by the ecclesiastics. A similar croft in the church of St. Doulough's, near Dublin, is furnished with a fire-place, a fact which clearly demonstrates that they were applied to the purpose of a habitation.

The doorways of Cormac's Chapel are three in number,—one in the centre of the west end, and one in each of the side walls of the nave, within a few feet of the west gable. The northern and southern doorways are original, and are headed with a tympanum or lintel between the aperture and the semicircular arches above. They are both exceedingly rich in sculpture, but the northern doorway appears to have been the chief entrance, as it is considerably larger, and more highly decorated, than the other. It is surmounted with a canopy, and the tympanum is sculptured with a very singular device, representing a combat between a

centaur armed with bow and arrow, and a huge animal, probably intended for a lion. The head of the centaur is covered by a conical helmet with a nasal, and he is shooting a barbed arrow into the breast of the lion. A small animal beneath the feet of the latter appears to have been slain in the encounter.

The southern doorway, which is now filled up, is not canopied, and its tympanum is sculptured with a single animal, not unlike the lion upon the other.

At Cashel, the perfect round tower, Cormac's Chapel, the magnificent cathedral founded by Donogh O'Brien, King of Thomond, *circa* 1152, the ancient castle of the Archbishops, Hoar Abbey, situated upon the plain immediately beside the Rock, and the numerous crosses and other remains, afford most valuable studies for the architectural antiquary or the artist.

CHAPTER IV.

CROSSES, ETC.

VARIETIES OF THE EARLY CROSSES.—EXAMPLES AT MONASTERBOICE.
 —THEIR SCULPTURE AND DECORATIONS.—MONUMENTAL STONES.—
 ANCIENT GRAVES.—EXAMPLES AT SAINT JOHN'S POINT, ARRANGED
 IN CIRCLES.—TOWYN-Y-CHAPEL, HOLYHEAD.



THE graves of many of the early Irish saints are marked by stones differing in nowise from the pagan pillar stone, except that in some instances they are sculptured with a cross, plain or within a circle. This style of monument appears to have been succeeded by a rudely-formed cross, the arms of which are little more than indicated, and which is usually fixed in a socket, cut in a large flat stone. Such crosses rarely exhibit any kind of ornament, but occasionally, even in very rude examples, the upper part of the shaft is hewn into the form of a circle, from which the arms and the top extend; and those portions of

the stone by which the circle is indicated are frequently perforated, or slightly recessed. A fine plain cross of this style may be seen in the graveyard of Tullagh, County Dublin; and there is an early decorated example near the church of Finglas, in the same county. Crosses, highly sculptured, appear to have been very generally erected between the ninth and twelfth centuries; but there are no examples of a later period remaining, if we except a few bearing inscriptions in Latin or English, which belong to the close of the sixteenth, or to the seventeenth century, and which can hardly be looked upon as either Irish or ancient.

From the rude pillar stone marked with the symbol of our faith, enclosed within a circle, the emblem of eternity, the finely proportioned and elaborately sculptured crosses of a later period are derived. In the latter, the circle, instead of being simply cut upon the face of the stone, is represented by a ring, binding, as it were, the shaft, arms, and upper portion of the cross together. The beautiful remains of this class at Monasterboice, near Drogheda, though the finest now remaining in Ireland, are nearly equalled by some scores of others scattered over the whole island. Indeed, in our crosses alone we have evidence sufficient to satisfy the most sceptical of the skill which the Irish had attained in more of the arts than one,

during the earlier ages of the Church. They may be regarded, not only as memorials of the piety and munificence of a people whom ignorance and prejudice have too often sneered at as barbarous, but also as the finest works of sculptured art, of their period, now existing. Two crosses at Monasterboice remain in their ancient position, and are well preserved, though one of them, in particular, bears distinct evidence of a systematic attempt having been made to destroy it. A third has been broken to pieces, the people say by Cromwell, but its head, and part of the shaft, remaining uninjured, the fragment has been set in the ancient socket.

The larger of the two nearly perfect crosses measures twenty-seven feet in height, and is composed of three stones. The shaft, at its junction with the base, is two feet in breadth, and one



Great Cross, Monasterboice.

foot and three inches in thickness. It is divided upon the western side by fillets into seven compartments, each of which contains two or more figures cut with very bold effect, but much worn by the rain and wind of nearly nine centuries. The sculpture of the first compartment, beginning at the base, has been destroyed by those who attempted to throw down the cross. The second contains five figures, of which one, apparently the most important, is presenting a book to another, who receives it with both hands, while a large bird seems resting upon his head. The other figures in this compartment represent females, one of whom holds a child in her arms.

Compartments 3, 4, 5, and 6, contain three figures each, evidently the Apostles, and each figure is represented with a book. The seventh division, which runs into the circle forming the head of the cross, is occupied by two figures; and immediately above them is a representation of our Saviour crucified, while a soldier upon each side is piercing his body with a spear. To the right and to the left of the figure of our Saviour, other sculptures appear. The figures upon the right arm of the cross are represented apparently in the act of adoration. The action of those upon the left is obscure, and in consequence of the greater exposure of the upper portion of the stone to the weather, the

sculpture which it bears is greatly worn, and almost effaced.

The sides of the cross are ornamented with figures and scroll work placed alternately in compartments one above the other. Of the circle by which the arms and the shaft are connected, the external portions are enriched; and, as an example, we have engraved the compartment beneath the left arm.



The eastern side is also divided into compartments occupied by sculptures, which may refer to Scripture history.

The smaller cross is most eminently beautiful. The

figures and ornaments with which its various sides are enriched appear to have been executed with an unusual degree of care, and even of artistic skill. It has suffered but little from the effects of time. The sacrilegious hands which attempted the ruin of the others appear to have spared this, and it stands almost as perfect as when, nearly nine centuries ago, the artist, we may suppose, pronounced his work finished, and chiefs and abbots, bards, shanachies,

Ornament beneath the Arm
of Great Cross at Monas-
terboice.

warriors, ecclesiastics, and perhaps many a rival sculptor, crowded round this very spot, full of wonder and admiration for what they must have considered a truly glorious, and perhaps unequalled work. An inscription in Irish, upon the lower part of the shaft, desires "a prayer for Muiredach, by whom was made this cross;" but, as Dr. Petrie, by whom the inscription has been published, remarks, there were two of the name



Cross of Muiredach, at Monasterboice.

mentioned in the Irish Annals as having been connected with Monasterboice, one an abbot, who died in the year 844, and the other in the year 924, "so that it must be a matter of some uncertainty to which of these the erection of the cross should be ascribed." There is reason, however, to assign it to the latter, "as he was a man of greater distinction, and probably wealth, than the former, and

therefore more likely to have been the erector of the crosses." Its total height is exactly fifteen feet, and it is six in breadth at the arms. The shaft, which at the base measures in breadth two feet six inches, and in thickness one foot nine inches, diminishes slightly in its ascent, and is divided upon its various sides, by twisted bands, into compartments, each of which contains either sculptured figures or tracery of very intricate design, or animals, probably symbolical.

The figures and other sculptures retain, almost unimpaired, their original sharpness and beauty of execution. The former are of great interest, as affording an excellent idea of the dress, both ecclesiastical and military, of the Irish during the ninth or tenth century. As an example we have engraved the two



Portion of the Sculpture upon the smaller Cross at Monasterboice.

lower compartments upon the west side. Within the circular head of the cross, upon its eastern face, our Saviour is represented sitting in judgment. A choir of angels occupy the arm to the right of the figure. Several are represented with musical instruments, among which the ancient Irish harp may be seen. It is small and triangular, and rests upon the knees of the performer, who is represented in a sitting posture. The space to the left of our Saviour is crowded with figures, several of which are in an attitude of despair. They are the damned; and an armed fiend is driving them from before the throne. The compartment immediately beneath bears a figure weighing in a pair of huge scales a smaller figure, the balance seeming to preponderate in his favour. One who appears to have been weighed, and found wanting, is lying beneath the scales in an attitude of terror. The next compartment beneath represents apparently the adoration of the wise men. The star above the head of the infant Christ is distinctly marked. The third compartment contains several figures, the action of which we do not understand. The signification of the sculpture of the next following compartment is also very obscure. A figure seated upon a throne or chair is blowing a horn, and soldiers with conical helmets, armed with short, broad-bladed swords, and with small circular shields, ap-

pear crowding in. The fifth and lowest division illustrates the Temptation and the Expulsion. The figures upon the western face of the shaft, of which we have engraved two compartments, probably relate to the early history of Monasterboice. The head of the cross upon this side is sculptured with a representation of the Crucifixion, very similar to that upon the head of the larger cross, but the execution is better. Its northern arm underneath bears the representation of a hand extended, and holding what Wright, in his *Louthiana*, calls a cake, probably the Host. Of the broken cross, which is extremely plain, we have engraved a boss, placed within its circle.

An early monumental stone remains in the cemetery, a few yards to the north of the less ancient church. The inscription is in the Irish language and character,

and reads in English, "A prayer for Ruarchan."

A simple flag-stone, inscribed with a name, and sculptured with the sacred symbol of Christianity, such as it was the custom among the early Irish



Boss of Cross, Monasterboice.

Christians to place over the grave of an eminent man, forms a striking contrast to the tablets which too often disfigure the walls of our cathedral and parish churches. Many remains of this class lie scattered among the ancient and often neglected graveyards of Ireland, but they are every day becoming more rare, as the country stone-cutters, by whom they are regarded with but slight veneration, frequently form out of their materials modern tombstones, defacing the ancient inscription. We have engraved an example hitherto unnoticed, from Inis Cealtra, an island in Lough Derg, an expansion of the Shannon.



Inscribed Tomb-Stone.

In several cemeteries found in connexion with the earlier monastic establishments of Ireland, graves formed after the pagan fashion, of flat stones placed edgewise in an oblong figure, and covered with large flags, frequently occur. But that in several instances the stones at either end of the enclosure have been sculptured with a cross, they might be supposed to indicate the site of a pagan cemetery

which the early Christians, for obvious reasons, had hallowed by the erection of a chapel. The direction of the grave is generally east and west, but in the cemetery adjoining the very early church at Saint John's Point, in the county of Down, and elsewhere, the cists are arranged in the form of a circle, to the centre of which the feet of the dead converge.

A similar mode of interment, which occurs at Town-y-Chapel, near Holyhead, in Wales, is referred to in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. iii. ; and it is worthy of remark, that the place where the graves are found appears to have been the scene of a battle, fought about A.D. 450, in which many Irishmen were slain.

CHAPTER V.

ROUND TOWERS.

OPINIONS FORMERLY CURRENT WITH REGARD TO THE ORIGIN AND USES OF THE ROUND TOWERS.—THEIR CHARACTERISTICS.—DOORWAYS.—WINDOWS AND APERTURES.—EXAMPLES AT CLONDALKIN, MONASTERBOICE, KILDARE, AND DONOUGHMORE.



ROUND Towers, of about eighteen feet in external diameter, and varying in height between 60 and 115 feet, are frequently found in connexion with the earlier monastic establishments of Ireland. The question of their origin and uses has long occupied much antiquarian attention. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had been regarded by our antiquaries as the work of the Danes; but towards the close of the last century General Vallancey propounded various theories, which assumed them to be of Phœnician or Indo-Scythic origin, and to have contained the sacred fire from whence all the

fires in the kingdom were annually rekindled. But Vallancey was very unsteady in his opinions, and his successors multiplied their theories till they be-



Antrim Tower.

came almost as numerous as the towers themselves; and each succeeding writer, instead of elucidating, appeared to involve the subject in deeper mystery than ever,—a mystery that was proverbial, till dis-

pelled completely and for ever, by Dr. Petrie, in his late beautiful and splendid work, which has justly been judged as "the most learned, the most exact, and the most important ever published upon the antiquities of the ancient Irish nation."*

The following are Dr. Petrie's conclusions:

I. That the towers are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin, and were erected at various periods between the fifth and thirteenth centuries.

II. That they were designed to answer, at least, a twofold use, namely: to serve as belfries, and as keeps, or places of strength, in which the sacred utensils, books, relics, and other valuables, were deposited, and into which the ecclesiastics to whom they belonged could retire for security, in cases of sudden attack.

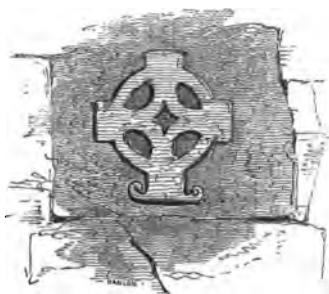
III. That they were probably also used, when occasion required, as beacons and watch-towers.

That these conclusions were arrived at after a long and patient investigation, not only of the architectural peculiarities of the numerous Round Towers, but also of the ecclesiastical structures usually found in connexion with them, is sufficiently shewn by many references to, and illustrations of examples scattered over the whole island. But Dr. Petrie, also, with the assistance of the best

* Thomas Davis, in the *Nation*.

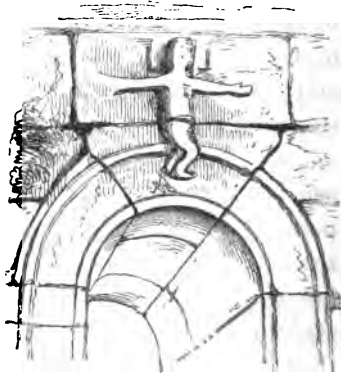
Celtic scholars in Ireland, sought in our annals and in our ancient MSS. [fortunately not a few] for references to such buildings as it was the custom of the Irish to erect; and from this hitherto neglected source of information, much of the light which he has thrown upon the subject of ancient Irish ecclesiology has been derived. The third and remaining portion of Dr. Petrie's work, it is to be hoped, will soon appear. But to our subject. There is but little variety to be observed in the construction or details of the Round Towers. The following is a summary of their usual features:

DOORWAYS.—In form similar to those which we have described as characteristic of the early churches, but they are generally more highly ornamented, and appear to have been furnished with double doors. They are placed almost invariably at a considerable elevation above the ground. A flat projecting band, with a small bead moulding at the angles, is the most usual decoration, but in some instances a human head, sculptured in bold relief,



Cross of the Doorway of Antrim Tower.

is found upon each side of the arch. A stone immediately above the doorway of Antrim tower exhibits a cross sculptured in alto-relievo; and at Donoughmore, in the county of Meath, a figure of the Crucifixion occupies a similar position. This style of decoration may have been much more common than is generally supposed, as of the number of towers remaining in Ireland the doorways of at least one-third have been de-



Sculpture of Doorway of Donoughmore Tower, County Meath.

stroyed. Concentric arches, with chevron and other mouldings, occur at Timahoe and at Kildare.

WINDOWS AND APERTURES.—Generally similar in form to those in contemporaneous churches, with this difference, that they never splay, and that the arch-head in numerous examples is of a different form upon the interior from the exterior. The tower was usually divided into stories, the floors of which were supported by projections of the masonry, or by brackets. Each story, except the highest, was generally lighted by one small win-

dow: the highest has generally four of large size. A conical roof of stone completed the building.

In the village of Clondalkin, at a distance of about four miles from Dublin, and adjoining the station of the Dublin and Cashel Railway, stands one of the most perfectly preserved of the Round Towers. Its height is about eighty-four feet. The doorway, which is approached by a flight of stone steps, comparatively modern, is square-headed, and perfectly plain, as are



Clondalkin Tower.

also the windows and other apertures. Some years ago a gentleman of the neighbourhood caused this tower to be repaired, upon which occasion floors were added, and placed in their ancient position. Access may be had from story to story by the aid of fixed ladders, so that a visitor has here an opportunity for observation not frequently to be met with. It should be observed that the projection

at the base is not found in any other instance, and that it may possibly be an after-work. The tower of Clondalkin, though nearly perfect, cannot be considered a very fine example of its class. It is unusually low, and its roof, which does not appear to be original, is wanting in that degree of lightness and elegance observable in many.



Doorway of Clondalkin Tower.

The other towers in the immediate neighbourhood of Dublin are at Swords, Lusk, and Rath-michael. The last is a mere stump, and as the others do not present any point of attraction not equally to be found at Clondalkin, we shall refer our readers to the noble example at Monasterboice, within four miles and a half of Drogheda. The churches, the tower, and the magnificent crosses of this ancient seat of piety and learning, form a group of ecclesiastical antiquities in many respects unsurpassed in Ireland. A description of the crosses will be found in a former chapter.

The tower, the erection of which there is every reason to refer to a very early period, is one of pe-

culiar and striking interest, exhibiting, as it does, a decorated doorway, the head of which is cut out



General View of Monasterboice.

of two stones laid horizontally one above the other. A band extends round the head and down the sides of the doorway, but terminates on a level with the sill, or rather turns off at a right angle, passing horizontally for a distance of eight inches, from which point it ascends, and, running upwards round the doorway head, gives the appearance of a double band. A space between the bands, upon each side of the upper part of the doorway, and one upon the

semicircular arched head, left uncut, appear suggestive of the cross. The window immediately over the doorway may be looked upon as a characteristic example of the opening found in a similar position in most of the towers, and which is supposed to have answered the purpose of a second doorway, or to have been designed for the purpose of affording persons within the tower some means of defending the doorway beneath. In this example, however, it is unusually small. The other windows are square-headed, as were also the large apertures of the uppermost story [see Wright's *Louthiana*, plate 14, Book iii.] The masonry is good, and characteristic of a very early period; the stones large, well fitted together, and passing through a considerable thickness of the wall, as may be observed in the upper portion of the structure, where, from the effects of lightning, or from some other cause, a considerable rent has been made. A church of very rude construction, and probably several centuries older than the tower, stands in the cemetery, at a little distance to the north-east of the other remains. Its only doorway is placed, as usual, in the centre of the west gable. It is square-headed, and possesses every indication of a very high antiquity, but the accumulation of the churchyard soil has buried the lower portion at least to a depth of several feet. The church presented anciently the nave and chancel; the lat-

ter has been destroyed, but a plain semicircular chancel arch remains. The church immediately adjoining the Round Tower is obviously an erection of the early part of the thirteenth century. For a notice of the crosses of this most interesting locality see chapter iv., page 87.

Since the opening of the Dublin and Cashel Railway, the ancient town of Kildare is brought within a journey of scarcely two hours of the metropolis, and, by taking an early train from Dublin, the student of antiquities may examine the ruins of Kildare, Carlow, and Killeslin, and return the same day.

The Round Tower of Kildare is in several respects one of the most remarkable in Ireland. Its doorway, of which we annex an illustration, is unusually rich, consisting of three concentric arches, upon two of which a variety of mouldings appear. The external arch is quite plain, and evidently not so ancient as the others. A rudely constructed



Doorway of Kildare Tower.

canopy, a portion of which still remains, anciently surmounted the doorway. This tower, it should be observed, is unusually large, and bears evidence of having been repaired at various periods. Like the Round Tower of Cloyne, in the county of Cork, it is finished with a plain battlemented parapet, comparatively modern, and added, probably, at some period when the original roof of stone had lately been destroyed by lightning or by other means. In a preceding chapter we noticed the singularly interesting group of early ecclesiastical structures remaining in the valley of Glendalough, in the county of Wicklow. The Round Tower, a work apparently coeval with the "Cathedral," may be looked upon as one of the most ancient now to be found in Leinster; and as, with the exception of the roof, it retains all its original features, and appears never to have been repaired, there are few structures of the kind more worthy of an attentive examination.

Such of our readers as may be induced to visit the antiquities of Dowth and Newgrange, are recommended to extend their drive as far as Donoughmore, near Navan, where they will find a tower interesting in many points, but particularly as the stone which forms the crown of its doorway arch, and the one immediately above it, are sculptured with a figure of the Crucifixion, as represented in page 102.

PART III.

ANGLO-IRISH REMAINS.

CHAPTER I.

ABBEYS, ETC.

JERPOINT ABBEY, COUNTY KILKENNY.—CATHEDRALS OF ST. PATRICK AND CHRIST CHURCH, DUBLIN.—ABBEYS OF NEWTOWN AND BECTIVE, NEAR TRIM.—CHURCHES OF CANNISTOWN AND ST. DOULOUGH'S.—HOWTH ABBEY, AND ST. FENTON'S CHURCH.



THE preceding chapters, monuments of a character almost peculiar to Ireland have been described. It has been remarked by Miss Beaufort, that at the English Invasion, Irish architecture may be said to have ceased, the English adventurers having brought with them their own fashion of building, which was afterwards copied by the Irish. Certain

it is, that the close of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries witnessed a great change in the style of architecture, as applied to ecclesiastical edifices, in Ireland; but that this change was a consequence of the Invasion, or that the pointed style was borrowed from, or introduced into Ireland by the English, has not been ascertained. We have, in common with other nations, evidence of the gradual adoption of the pointed arch in our ecclesiastical structures; and it should be observed that, for several centuries previous to the Invasion, Irish architecture had been gradually undergoing a change, and had, in a great measure, become what in England is called "Norman," or Romanesque,—a style from which, or rather through which, the Gothic arose ultimately, from the pure Temple architecture of Greece and Rome.*

Towards the close of the twelfth century the Irish kings and chiefs, and the Anglo-Norman earls and barons settled in Ireland, appear to have vied with each other in the erection of abbeys, the ruins of which to this day attest the zeal and power of their founders. Most of the monastic structures of this period, in their larger arches, exhibit beautiful examples of the earliest pointed style, while the doorways and smaller openings remain semicircular,

* Paley.

and frequently exhibit pure Norman details. Chevroned pointed arches occur in the nave of Dunbrody Abbey, which was erected by Hervey De Mountmorris, and belongs to this period. The choir is generally vaulted, and lighted by three windows, exceedingly tall and narrow, and separated by massive piers, the chamfers upon the external angles of which almost amount to splays. Jerpoint Abbey, in the county of Kilkenny, founded



Jerpoint Abbey.

by Donogh [Mac Gillapatrik], King of Ossory, is perhaps the grandest structure of this period remaining in Ireland.

The plan of the church was cruciform, with aisles

on the north side of both nave and choir. The greater portion of the southern wall has been destroyed. The western window consists of three days or lights, with semicircular heads, surmounted by a continuous weather-moulding. A fine range of clear-story windows of the same character appears in the northern wall of the nave. The tower, though of very considerable antiquity, is evidently of later date than the transition period, and was probably added contemporaneously with the decorated window in the eastern end of the choir. The only entrance to the body of the church from the exterior appears to have been a small doorway in the south wall of the nave, and this is defended by a bartizan similar to those found upon castles of the twelfth century. The transition style soon gave place to the early pointed, and our grandest existing cathedrals and abbeys almost exclusively belong to the latter. As early examples we may mention portions of Christ Church and St. Patrick's, Dublin; Gray Abbey, county of Down; the Cathedral of Cashel; the Abbey of Newtown, near Trim; and Kilmallock Abbey, county of Limerick. Perhaps the finest window of this style in Ireland is that of the Abbey of Kilmallock. It consists of five slender lancets, separated by shafts, upon which are two sets of the bands so characteristic of this period. A large and beautifully proportioned arch embraces

all the lights, which, both internally and externally, are enriched with a bead moulding.

The cathedrals of St. Patrick and Christ Church, Dublin, have been frequently described. The former was erected, probably upon the site of an older church, by John Comyn, Archbishop of Dublin, who, according to Ware, died in 1212. Its prevailing style is early or first pointed, and it is remarkable as the only structure in Ireland having flying buttresses. A lofty and well-proportioned tower, erected in 1370, rises from the north-west angle of the building, and supports a spire of granite, an addition of the last century, as its character sufficiently testifies.

Though, in point of size and architectural grandeur, St. Patrick's cannot be compared with many structures of the same class elsewhere, it is still a very chaste and beautiful church, and its claims to admiration are likely to be increased by the careful and highly judicious course of restoration it is now undergoing, under the superintendence of gentlemen every way qualified for the trust, and for which a public subscription has been set on foot. Christ Church Cathedral was originally founded in the early part of the eleventh century, by Sitric, son of Amlave, King of the Danes of Dublin, in conjunction with Donatus, the first Danish bishop, but no portion of the present structure is of higher anti-

quity than the close of the twelfth century. The arches of the northern nave wall are remarkably beautiful. They spring from piers formed of clustered columns, and displaying in their capitals foliage of most exquisitely graceful design. The bases, unfortunately, lie buried beneath the pavement. Many of the arches display chevron mouldings, and the doorway which forms the present entrance to the nave is completely Norman. It was removed at the time of the re-erection of the north transept, in which it anciently stood, and placed in the south transept, where it forms a conspicuous and striking feature.

To every student of the mediæval architecture of Ireland we strongly recommend a visit to the ancient town of Trim, not only because its neighbourhood contains many remains of high interest, and may be visited with little expenditure of time, but also as it forms a centre from which several excursions might be made, Kells, Tara, and Bective, lying not far off. Its chief attraction is the noble castle of which we shall give an illustration in another portion of this volume. For the present we shall confine our remarks to some of the antiquities of Newtown, a village situated upon the Boyne, a little lower down than Trim. The Abbey, founded by Simon Rochfort, or De Rupeforti, for Augustine Canons, about A. D. 1206, and

dedicated to Saint Peter and Saint Paul, though now in a woeful state of dilapidation, was anciently one of the grandest in this part of the country, as may be judged from the exquisite beauty of some of the details, such as capitals, vaulting, shafts, &c.,



Newtown Abbey.

which have not been disturbed, and from the numerous fragments of its once noble windows and arches, with which the surrounding cemetery is strewn. Broad strips of masonry, placed at a considerable distance apart, project from the walls of the church upon the exterior, a feature never found but in early work, and which is generally characteristic of the Norman period. But it is within the walls that we must seek for evidence of the former beauty of the building. Several chastely

decorated corbel shafts remain, and support portions of the ribs by which the vaulted roof was sustained. The windows are of the lancet form, with piers between, and the mouldings which run round them are ornamented with beautifully designed bands. Sedilia, in the Norman style of architecture, may be seen in the wall to the right of the space anciently occupied by the altar. The ruins upon the opposite side of the river, and the



Bective Abbey.

ancient bridge at this place, are well worthy of notice, but, as they do not possess any striking peculiarity, we shall refer our readers to the Abbey of Bective, in the immediate neighbourhood of Trim, a Cistercian house, founded by Murchard

O'Melaghlin, Prince of Meath, in A. D. 1146, 1148, or 1151.

These ruins combine a union of ecclesiastical with military and domestic architecture in a remarkable degree. Their chief feature is a strong battlemented tower, the lower apartment of which is vaulted, placed at the south-west corner of the quadrangular space occupied by the various buildings, and in the centre of which the cloisters remain in excellent preservation. The cloister arches are late in the first pointed style, and are cinque-foiled. The featherings are mostly plain, but several are ornamented with flowers or leaves, and upon one a hawk-like bird is sculptured. A fillet is worked upon each of the clustered shafts by which the openings are divided, and also upon their capitals. The bases, which are circular, rest upon square plinths, the angles of which are ornamented with a leaf, as it were, growing out of the base moulding. Of the church there are scarcely any remains. As the northern wall of the cloister is pierced with several windows, which now have the appearance of splaying externally, it is extremely probable that it also served as the south wall of the church, no other portion of which can at present be identified. Those buildings which were devoted to domestic purposes are, for the most part, situated upon the east side of the quadrangle. Their architectural details are of a

character later than those of the tower and of the other portions, but additions and alterations have evidently been made. Several of the apartments have large fire-places, covered with flat arches, the stones of which are dove-tailed into one another. The flues are carried up through the thickness of the wall, and are continued through square, tapering chimney-shafts, headed with a plain cornice. In its general arrangement Bective Abbey differs from every other monastic structure in the kingdom. It is, in fact, a monastic castle, and, previous to the use of artillery, must have been regarded as a place of great strength. The smaller churches of the close of the twelfth, and of the early half of the thirteenth century, are not different in general form from those of an earlier age. In a few examples, indeed, transepts occur, as in the church of Clady, adjoining Bective, but they are not invariably evidences of comparatively recent work, as they are sometimes found in connexion with very early churches, to which they have evidently been added, and from which, in their architectural details, they differ in every respect.

Down to the very latest period of Gothic architecture, the original plan of a simple nave, or nave and chancel, was followed, and the chief or only difference observable in churches of very late date, from those of the sixth and seventh centuries, con-

sists in the form of the arch heads, the position of the doorway, the style of the masonry, which is usually much better in the more ancient examples, and the use of bell-turrets, the cloigteach, or detached Round Tower, having answered this purpose during the earlier ages. A beautiful and highly characteristic example of an early pointed church may be seen at Cannistown, not far from Bective, upon the opposite side of the river. As usual, it consists of a nave and chancel, and there are the remains of a bell-turret upon the west gable, the usual position. The choir arch is represented in the annexed cut. There are numerous examples of churches of this style scattered over the entire island, but they are usually plain, and the choir arch is generally the plainest feature of the building. As examples we can refer our readers to the churches of Kilbar-rack, Dalkey, Kinsaly, and Rathmichael, all in the immediate neighbourhood of Dublin. The church



Choir Arch of Cannistown Church.

of Dalkey, indeed, cannot be regarded as a good example, as it has evidently been altered and remodelled at various times, and a portion of its northern nave wall, including the semicircularly arched window, may probably have formed part of an extremely early church, dedicated to St. Begnet, which is recorded to have stood here. We may here observe that piscinas and stoups do not occur in the early churches of Ireland; they appear to have been adopted during the latter half of the twelfth century, and churches of a later period frequently contain several.

The church of St. Doulough, the origin of which is involved in the deepest obscurity, is the most remarkable and unique example of pointed architecture remaining in Ireland. It stands at a distance of about four miles from Dublin, in the direction of Malahide, and has long occupied the attention of writers upon the subject of Irish antiquities. This church has been generally classed with the stone-roofed chapels and oratories of the early Irish saints; but its style is wholly different, and numerous architectural peculiarities, evidently original, prove the building to belong to the thirteenth century. In plan it is an oblong, with a low square tower in the centre. A projection on the southern wall of the tower contains a passage leading from the upper part of the building to an

exceedingly small chamber, in the eastern wall of which are two windows, one commanding the only entrance to the church, the other an altar in an



St. Douglough's Church.

apartment or chapel between the tower and the west gable. The body of the building is divided upon the interior by a mass of masonry which was

evidently intended as a support to the roof, and which contains a small semicircular arch, now stopped up. The western apartment measures ten by seven and a half feet: it is vaulted, and was anciently lighted by several windows, with square or trefoiled heads. The altar, or "tomb," as it is popularly called, rests immediately against the masonry which divides this apartment from other portions of the building. The chapel, or western apartment, measures twenty-one feet by nine and a half. It was lighted by four windows, one to the east, two to the south, and one, now stopped up, to the north. The eastern window is larger than the others, and is divided into two lights by a shaft, with shallow hollows at the sides, and a semi-cylindrical moulding on its external face. Similar hollows, and a moulding, run round the arch, and meet those of the shafts. The northern window is of the plain, early, lancet form. The windows in the southern wall are unequal in size; the larger one is placed beneath the tower, near the centre of the building, and is divided by a shaft into two lights, the heads of which are cinque-foiled, while the space between them and the crown of the arch is left plain. The vaults of the lower apartments form the floor of a croft occupying uninterruptedly the whole length of the building. There are the remains of a fire-place in the centre of the northern

wall of this singular room, which appears to have been used anciently as a habitation. It is lighted by small trefoiled windows in the end walls, and is higher, by several feet, for a distance of about four yards from the west gable, than in the other part. By this arrangement, and by a depression of the vault of the western division of the building, provision is made for a small intermediate apartment, to which a passage from the lower leads. The tower was divided by a wooden floor into two stories, the lower of which contains a small fireplace. The roof is formed of stones, well cut, and laid in regular courses. It has been suggested that the tower is more modern than the church. The upper portion is certainly different in its style of masonry from the rest of the building, and appears to be an ancient addition or restoration, but the body of the tower is clearly coeval with the church.

Such are the more remarkable features of this singular and unexampled structure, in the erection of which the architect appears studiously to have avoided every principle of Gothic composition except variety.

The well of St. Doulough, which was probably also used as a baptistry, is quite in keeping with the singular character of his church. The spring, which is covered by a stone-roofed, octagon building, rises through a circular bason, cut out of a

single stone, and was, not many years ago, thought to possess miraculous powers. According to tra-



St. Doulough's Well.

dition, the interior of the octagon building was anciently decorated with pictures, and holes are pointed out as having been made by the iron pins by which they were fastened to the wall. Adjoining is a most curious subterraneous bath. It is supplied by the well, and even yet the water rises to a considerable height within it. According to Mr. D'Alton, the well was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and the bath was called "St. Catherine's Pond."

The church of Howth [generally styled "the Abbey"] stands near the edge of a cliff, the base of which was formerly washed by the sea. It owes its origin to an ancestor of the present Lord Howth, and was erected in the early part of the thirteenth

century. "Placed upon a precipitous bank, considerably elevated above the water's edge, and surrounded by a strong embattled wall, it presents a striking evidence of the half-monk, half-soldier character of its founders."* A considerable portion of the original structure remains, but the whole of the north aisle is comparatively modern. The porch, in connexion with the northern doorway, is a very unusual feature in Irish churches,—a fact not easily to be accounted for, as they appear to have been common in England during every age of Gothic architecture. The nave arches, which are of the pointed form, are six in number; and with the exception of the two adjoining the eastern end, which are separated by an octagon pillar, they spring from rudely-formed quadrangular piers.

The tomb of Christopher, the twentieth Lord of Howth, who died in 1580, stands in the nave, not far from the eastern gable. It is a nice specimen of the altar tomb, but the inscription, owing to the neglected state in which the monument, until lately, was suffered to lie, has become illegible. A bell turret, with three apertures, rises from the western gable; the bells are said to be preserved in the adjoining castle. The little church of Saint Fenton, or Fintan, situated upon the hill of Howth, not far from

* "R. A.," Dublin Penny Journal, vol. ii.

the village of Sutton, cannot be of earlier date than the abbey. This singular building measures upon the interior but sixteen feet and a half, by seven feet and eight inches, yet it contains five windows: one to the east, two to the south, one to the north, and one in the west gable. The windows are of various forms: that to the east has a semicircular head, with a multifoil moulding; one of the windows in the south side wall is covered with a single stone, out of which a semicircular arch head is cut, while the other is quadrangular. All the windows splay upon the interior. A doorway in the lancet form is placed in the western gable, which supports a bell turret of considerable dimensions, and quite out of proportion to the size of the structure. It contains one small pointed aperture for a bell.

Of the origin of this structure nothing is known, but its date is sufficiently indicated by various architectural peculiarities which it exhibits, and which are characteristic of the thirteenth century. The cromlech of Howth, described in a former page, lies not far from Saint Fenton's, in a north-easterly direction; and we may remark, that such of our readers as may be induced to visit the locality, will find in the castle, abbey, and cromlech of Howth, and Saint Fenton's, much subject for study and observation.

CHAPTER II.



FONTS.

CHARACTER OF THE EARLY FONTS.—EXAMPLES AT KILLINEY AND
KILTERNAN.—FONT AT KILCARN, COUNTY OF MEATH.



VERY considerable number of ancient baptismal fonts still remain within the walls of the ruined churches of Ireland, and others are found in graveyards where churches, of which no vestige remains, formerly stood.

The fonts usually found in connexion with the more ancient churches are extremely rude, and of small dimensions, being rarely large enough to allow of the immersion of infants. They are in almost every instance formed of a single stone clumsily hollowed, and having a hole at the bottom of the basin ; but in some examples no mode of escape for the water appears.

An extremely early font occurs in the ancient church of Killiney, described in page 66, and there

is another in the equally ancient church of Kilternan, in the county of Dublin. An example in which there is no passage by which the water can be allowed to escape, may be seen in the church of Saint John's Point, County Down. The earliest fonts are generally somewhat circular in form, but the stone appears only to have been roughly hammered, and in no instance have we perceived any attempt at ornament. Perhaps the oldest ornamented font remaining in Ireland is that which stands in the graveyard of Killeslin. It is of a bulbous form, and the base is cut into an octagon figure. After the twelfth century fonts of greater size, and supported by a short column, appear to have become common. Their form is generally octagonal, but they are seldom ornamented in any way, and when ornaments occur, they consist only of a few mouldings upon the shaft, or upon the upper edge of the basin. From the absence of mouldings in the majority of instances, it is extremely difficult to assign a date to the numerous fonts of an octagon form which remain in many parts of the country. During the period of debased Gothic architecture, a great many appear to have been erected in Ireland, particularly in the district comprising the old English Pale. We have engraved an unusually fine example from the ancient church of Kilcarn, near Navan, in the county

of Meath. Placed upon its shaft, as represented in the cut, it measures in height about three feet six



Font at Kilcarn.

inches; the basin is two feet ten inches in diameter, and thirteen inches deep. The heads of the niches, twelve in number, with which its sides are carved, are enriched with foliage of a graceful but uniform character, and the miniature buttresses which separate the niches were decorated with crockets, the bases resting upon heads, grotesque animals, or human figures, carved as brackets. The figures within the niches are executed with a wonderful

degree of care, the drapery being represented with each minute crease or fold well expressed. They



Font at Kilcarn. No. 1.



Font at Kilcarn. No. 2.



Font at Kilcarn. No. 3.

were evidently intended to represent Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the twelve Apostles. All the figures are seated. Our Saviour, crowned as a king, and holding in his hand the globe and cross, is in the act of blessing the Virgin, who also is crowned, the "Queen of Heaven." The figures of most of the Apostles can easily be identified: Saint Peter, by his key; Saint Andrew, by his cross of peculiar shape; and so on. They are represented barefooted,

and each holds a book in one hand. The font does not now rest upon its ancient shaft, nor has it done



Font at Kilcarn. No. 4

so in the memory of the old people of the neighbouring village; but the shaft still remains within the church, and the whole might be easily restored.

A font almost precisely similar in design may be seen in the choir of the ruined church of Dunsany, near Dunshaughlin, in the same county, but it is of smaller size, and the figures and ornaments with which it is sculptured are less prominent than those upon the example at Kilcarn. A fine and unusually large font remains in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, and in several churches to which we have referred the reader interesting specimens occur.

CHAPTER III.

CASTLES, ETC.

THE CASTLES OF MALAHIDE, TRIM, SCURLOUGHSTOWN, AND BULLOCK.—
DRIMNAGH CASTLE AND BAWN.



HOUGH the castles of Ireland, in point of architectural magnificence, cannot be compared with some of the more important structures of a similar character in England, they are frequently of very considerable extent. Placed, as they generally are, upon the summit of a lofty and precipitous rock, the base of which is usually washed by the waters of a river or lake, or by the sea, encompassed with walls and towers pierced with shot-holes, and only to be approached through well defended gateways, they must, before the introduction of artillery, have been generally considered impregnable. Several of the early keeps are circular, but they usually consist of a massive quadrangular tower, with smaller towers at the angles. The internal ar-

rangements are similar in character to those observable in the military structures of the same period in England and elsewhere. The outworks and other appendages to the majority of our most remarkable castles have been destroyed, not by the usual effects of time and neglect, but by gunpowder, as the enormous masses of masonry overthrown, lying in confused heaps, sufficiently testify. The cannon of Cromwell left almost every stronghold of the Irish and of the Anglo-Irish in ruins. Shortly after the Restoration the necessity for castles ceased, and, with some exceptions, the few that had escaped the violence of the preceding period appear gradually to have been deserted and suffered to decay.



Malahide Castle.

The castle of Malahide, situated within a journey of half an hour, by railway, from Dublin, is perhaps the most perfectly preserved of the ancient

baronial residences now remaining in Ireland. It owes its foundation to Richard Talbot, who, in the reign of King Henry II., received a grant of the lordship of Malahide, and from whom the present lord is a lineal descendant. The castle, upon the exterior, retains but little of its ancient character: portions have been rebuilt; the old loopholes have given place to modern windows; the tower upon the south-east angle is an addition of the present century; the formidable outworks have long been removed, and a grassy hollow indicates the position of the ancient moat; yet, notwithstanding all these changes, it is still an object of great antiquarian interest. The engraving represents the castle from the south-west angle. You enter through a low Gothic porch, attached to which is the ancient oaken door, studded with huge nails, and from which the original knocker is suspended. The interior presents many features unique in Ireland. The celebrated oak room, with its quaintly carved arabesques, black as ebony,—the antique and beautiful armour with which it is appropriately decorated,—and the storied panels of its northern side,—form altogether a scene worthy the description of a Scott, or the pencil of a Roberts. Several of the other apartments are well worthy of examination, particularly the banqueting hall, a room of noble proportions, and retaining its original oaken roof.

The walls of the chief rooms are hung with pictures and portraits, several of which are of great historical interest. Among the former, an altarpiece, by Albert Durer, is perhaps the most remarkable. It is divided into compartments representing the Nativity, Adoration, and Circumcision. This interesting picture, which is said to have belonged to Queen Mary, of Scotland, was purchased by Charles II. for the sum of £2000, and presented by him to the Duchess of Portland, who gave it to the grandmother of the late Colonel Talbot. The portraits are chiefly by Vandyke, Sir Peter Lely, and Sir Godfrey Kneller. Those of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, by Vandyke, are noble examples of that great master's power. The chapel, popularly called the Abbey of Malahide, lies a little to the east of the castle. Though its architectural features are no way remarkable, it is a building of great picturesque beauty. The *perpendicular* window in the east end, however, should be seen, as also the tomb of Maud Plunkett, lying in the nave. Of this lady it is recorded that she was a maid, wife, and widow in one day, her husband having fallen when resisting a sudden predatory attack made by a neighbouring clan during the day of his marriage. The story forms the subject of a beautiful ballad from the pen of Gerald Griffin.

We have noticed the castle of Malahide first

among those to which we propose to draw the attention of the reader, not that we suppose it the most characteristic example of an ancient fortress lying within easy access from Dublin. On the contrary, we feel that, in the various alterations to which it has been subjected, its original aspect is, in a great measure, lost; but as it remains certainly the finest structure of its age and purpose still inhabited and occupied by a descendant of the original founder, now to be met with in Ireland, it appeared reasonably to claim a priority of notice. We shall now refer our readers to a castle of, at least, equal antiquity, and which, though in a state of utter ruin, will impress a visitor with a much more correct idea of the ancient feudal stronghold.

The castle of Trim, a town of Meath, upon the borders of what was once considered "the English Pale," lies at a distance of about twenty-two miles from Dublin, from which place it may be reached with little delay. The Rev. Richard Butler, in an interesting little volume entitled, "Some Notices of the Castle of Trim," has thrown much light upon the history of this once formidable stronghold. From Mr. Butler's book we have abridged the following description; the original is from the pen of H. James, Esq., R. E. The castle consists of a triangular walled enclosure, defended by circular flanking towers, and a large and lofty donjon or

keep in the centre. The north-eastern side is 171 yards long, and is defended by four towers, viz., two at the angles, and two intermediate. The west side is 116 yards long, and was defended by flanking towers at the angles, and a gateway tower



Castle of Trim.

in the centre. The portcullis groove is very perfect, and it seems, from the projecting masonry, that there had been a drawbridge and barbican to the gate. The third side sweeps round at an easy curve to the Boyne: it is 192 yards long, defended by six flanking towers, including those at the angles and at the gate. The gate tower is circular, and in good preservation, as well as the arches over the ditch, and the barbican beyond it. This gate had also its

portcullis, the groove for which, and the recess for its windlass, are perfect. The circumference of the castle wall, then, is 486 yards, defended by ten flanking towers, at nearly equal distances, including those at the gates. The donjon is a rectangular building, the plan of which may be thus described: on the middle of each side of 64 feet rectangles are constructed, the sides perpendicular to the square being twenty feet, and those parallel to it twenty-four feet, thus a figure of twenty sides is constructed. The thickness of the walls of the large tower is twelve feet, and of the smaller towers from four feet six inches to six feet. The walls were carried up sixty feet above the level of the ground, but on each angle of the large tower square turrets, sixteen feet six inches in height, are built. By this arrangement, a large shower of missiles might have been projected in any direction.

A castle, which there is every reason to believe occupied the site of the present structure, was erected by Walter de Lacy, who had obtained from Henry II. a grant of Meath. During the absence of De Lacy, while the castle was in the custody of Hugh Tyrrell, it was attacked and demolished by Roderick O'Connor, King of Connaught. In Dr. Hanmer's Chronicle of Ireland the circumstance of its re-erection is thus given:

“*Anno* 1220. Meath was wonderfully afflicted

and wasted by reason of the private quarrels and civil warres between William, Earl Marshall, Earle of Pembroke, &c., and Sir Hugh de Lacy, Earle of Ulster, and Lord of Connaght. Trimme was beseiged, and brought to a lamentable plight, and when the rage and fury of those garboiles was somewhat mitigated and appeased, after the shedding of much blood, the same year, to prevent afterclaps, and subsequent calamities, the castle of Trim was builded."

We refer such of our readers as would know more of the history of this majestic ruin, to Mr. Butler's work, published by Griffiths, in Trim; and in furtherance of our original plan, we turn to the ancient tower or castle of Scurloughstown, in its immediate vicinity. This is, perhaps, as good an example as any now remaining of the keep usually found in those districts wherein the earlier colonies of the English had

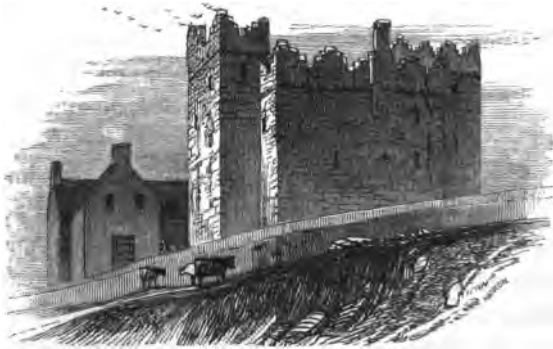


Scurloughstown Castle.

obtained footing. They are very numerous in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, in the county of Wexford; and examples occur in Kilkenny, and, indeed, in most of the eastern and north-eastern counties. Their plan is generally of the simplest kind. A tall, square keep, with a circular tower, in which is a spiral stair-case, communicating with its various floors, at one of its angles. The roof of the lowest apartment, and the floor of the second, are usually formed of a strong arch of stone. The other floors were of wood, and the brackets by which the timbers were supported are often sculptured into the form of a human head. The upper floors of a great number of these towers, however, were supported by beams of timber let into the walls, or resting upon projecting ledges of masonry. The doorway is generally of small size, and is almost invariably defended by a machicolation placed at a great height above it. Most of these castles were ornamented with battlements resting upon slightly projecting corbel-tables, but the merlons are rarely pierced. The water was carried off the roof generally by means of small apertures left in the wall, just above the corbel-table, spouts rarely appearing but in very late examples.

The windows, which are generally very small, splay internally, and are usually placed a little above the level of the floor, from which they were

approached by a few steps, and there is generally a stone seat within the splay, upon each side of the light. When fire-places occur they are surmounted either by a flat arch, the stones of which are dove-tailed one into another, or by a single stone laid horizontally. The chimney-shafts are generally quadrangular, and quite plain. In the county of Wexford, bawns, or walled enclosures, are usually found in connexion with these towers. The castle of Bullock, standing immediately above the har-



Bullock Castle.

bour of the same name, not far from the Terminus of the Dalkey and Kingstown Railway, was furnished with a bawn of this kind, but it is much larger than usual. The stranger in Dublin should

visit this interesting ruin, as well as the neighbouring towers or castles of Dalkey; at the latter place seven of these structures formerly stood. Their history is not known, but it is very probable that they were erected by English settlers, not long after the invasion of Ireland by Strongbow, their architectural peculiarities indicating an early period; and similar buildings, connected together by a wall enclosing a very considerable space, occur in several places known to have been occupied by the old English. We cannot dismiss this subject without mentioning the interesting and almost perfectly preserved castle of Drimnagh, lying at a distance of about four miles from Dublin, on the road to Crumlin. Its bawn is still perfect, and the ancient fosse, with which the whole was enclosed, remains in fine preservation, and is still deep. Drimnagh was considered as a place of considerable strength during the Rebellion of 1641, and it appears to have been strengthened, and, in a great measure, re-edified, about that unhappy period of Ireland's history.

CHAPTER IV.

TOWN-GATES, WALLS, ETC.

THE GATES OF DROGHEDA.—THE FAIR-GATE AT NEW ROSS, COUNTY OF WEXFORD.



ALTHOUGH it is pretty certain that the Danes, at a very early period, encompassed several of the cities and towns which they held in Ireland with walls and towers, their works have long disappeared, and, though the walls and gates of several of our ancient cities remain, they are obviously of comparatively late date, and are invariably found in connexion with places which we know to have been anciently strongholds of the English. Occasionally, as at Drogheda and at Athlone, the wall is of considerable height and thickness. That of Wexford, of which a large portion remains, is strengthened with semicircular towers, but they are usually plain. It is extremely probable that the great majority of

these works, at present remaining in Ireland, were spared, simply because, since the general application of gunpowder to the purposes of a siege, they could no longer be relied upon as fortifications. This much is certain, that the walls of all the Irish cities and towns, which were anciently remarkable for strength, and the security they afforded to the besieged, have been almost entirely destroyed.

Several gates and towers, however, remain, and of these the finest in the country may be seen at Drogheda. Saint Laurence's Gate, the subject of the annexed illustration, consists of two lofty circular towers, connected together by a wall, in the lower portion of which an archway is placed.

The towers, as well as the wall by which they are connected, are pierced with numerous loop-holes; and it is probable that the latter was anciently, upon the town-side, divided into stages



St. Laurence's Gate.

by platforms of timber, extending from tower to tower, otherwise the loop-holes could not have been used by the defenders of the gate, and we know that, even in their most beautiful buildings, the ancient architects rarely added an unnecessary feature. The other remaining gate-tower of Drogheda is octangular in form, defended with long narrow loop-holes, wider in the centre than in the other parts, and was further strengthened by a portcullis, the groove for which remains nearly perfect. The greater number of gate-towers remaining in Ireland



West Gate of Drogheda.

are square, and of considerable height. Their archways are generally semicircular, but there is a beautiful pointed example at Ross, in the county of Wexford. Since the period of Cromwell's "crowning mercy," the successful storming of Drogheda, the walls have been gradually sinking into utter ruin, but, from the portions which yet remain in a

tolerably perfect state, an idea may be formed of their ancient strength and grandeur. We shall conclude this notice by presenting our readers with



Sheep Gate and Yellow Steeple, Trim.

a view of the Sheep-Gate of Trim. The lofty tower in the distance, the steeple of St. Mary's Abbey,* is of a late period of Gothic architecture.

* Mr. Butler, in his book on the Castle of Trim, remarks that in 1449-50, Richard, Duke of York, held his court there; that he was a benefactor to Saint Mary's Abbey; and that the Yellow Steeple may probably be assigned to his time.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES.

WEAPONS, ORNAMENTS, ETC., ETC.

TORQUES AND GOLDEN ORNAMENTS.—SWORDS, SPEAR-HEADS, AND CELTS OF BRONZE.—WEAPONS OF STONE.—SEFULCHRAL URNS.—QUADRANGULAR BELLS.—CROOKS AND CROSIERS.—CROSS OF CONG.—ORNAMENTED CASES FOR SACRED WRITINGS.—WEAPONS OF IRON AND STEEL.



REGARDING the vast number of antiques discovered from year to year (we might almost write daily) in the bogs, beds of rivers, and newly-ploughed lands of Ireland, we cannot help regretting that the feeling which now very generally leads to the preservation of these evidences of ancient Irish civilization, should have slept so long. Let any one inquire of a country watchmaker, of a few years' standing, whether he has ever been offered for sale any antique ornaments of gold or silver, and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, his answer will be, "Yes, many:

but, as there was no one to purchase them, I melted them down." If questioned as to their form and character, he will describe rings, fibulæ, bracelets, perhaps torques, &c., generally adding that he regretted their destruction, as they were curiously engraved.

Bronze weapons, and articles of domestic use, suffered a similar fate in the foundries. Weapons of stone or iron, being of no intrinsic value, were completely disregarded, indeed it was but very lately that any antiques of the latter material were supposed to remain. At length a few private individuals, of known learning and taste, began to form collections. Fifteen or twenty years ago, antiques in Ireland were much more easily obtained than at present, and their success was very considerable. To form a museum then required neither the expenditure of much time nor money, and the example was soon followed by gentlemen in many parts of the country. Still, however, the destruction was only abated, and few of the collectors were possessed of sufficient knowledge to enable them to discriminate between objects of real national interest, and such as would now be considered unimportant. The Dublin Penny Journal, a weekly publication, in which numerous woodcuts, accompanied with letter-press descriptions of objects of Irish antiquarian interest, were, for the first time, pre-

sented to the public, did much to dispel this ignorance. Other publications followed, new collectors appeared, a general interest was excited, and it is to be hoped that, for some years back, there have been few instances of the wanton destruction of any remarkable relic of ancient Ireland. Any attempt to describe in a volume such as this a number of the objects of interest deposited in our public museums, or in the cabinets of private collectors, would prove utterly abortive; but a glance at some of the most remarkable of those now preserved in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy, and in that of the College of Saint Columba, at Stackallen, will probably interest some of our readers. The former may be inspected by any visitor, upon the introduction of a member.

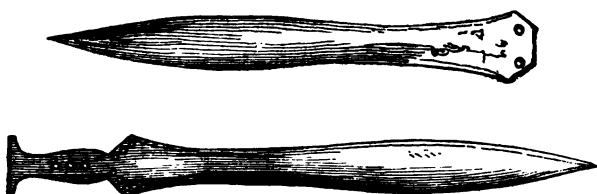
The Royal Irish Academy, for the Study of Polite Literature, Science, and Antiquities, was instituted in 1786. Its Museum has been only a few years in progress, yet it comprises the finest collection of Celtic antiquities known to exist. Many of the objects are presentations, others have been merely deposited for exhibition in the Museum, but the great mass of the collection has been purchased by the Academy with funds raised by subscription among its members, and other patriotic individuals, the annual grant from Government being very trifling, and wholly disproportionate to the importance

of the Society. A visitor, upon entering the room in which the antiques are shewn, is immediately struck with the rich display of golden ornaments, consisting of torques, collars, crescents, fibulæ, &c. One of the torques measures five feet seven inches in length, and weighs twenty-seven ounces and nine penny-weights. A second weighs twelve ounces and six penny-weights. These were discovered in 1810 by a man engaged in the removal of an old bank upon the celebrated Hill of Tara, and they subsequently became the property of the late Duke of Sussex, after whose death they were purchased, and secured to this country, by subscriptions raised chiefly among members of the Academy.

Torques appear to have been common among the Gauls, Britons, and other Celtic people, from a very remote period. Plates of gold, in the form of a crescent, the ends of which are turned off, and formed of small circular pieces of about an inch in diameter, have very frequently been discovered in Ireland. They are generally ornamented with engraved borders, similar in design to the decorations most common upon sepulchral urns; but several examples are quite plain, and others are engraved upon one side only. The Academy contains several of these singular antiques. In the same case with the torques is a fine and richly carved bulla, found about a century ago in the bog of Allen.

A second is preserved in the museum of the College of Saint Columba, but it is without ornament.

The Academy Museum contains an example of almost every kind of Celtic ornament of gold hitherto discovered, and several that are unique. The bronze antiques consist of swords, skeans, spear-heads, celts or axes, bridle-bits, spurs, chains, &c. &c., and there are numerous pots, vessels, and other articles of the same period and material. The general form of swords of the bronze age will be best understood by reference to the wood-cut,

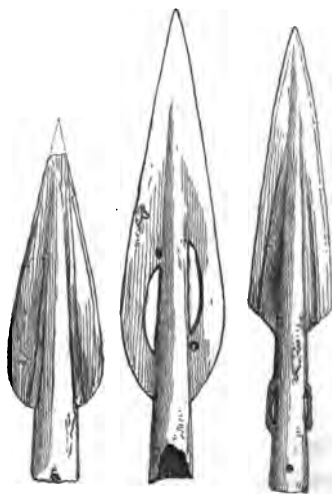


No. 1. Swords.

which represents two of several now deposited in the museum of the College of Saint Columba.

The spear-heads are extremely various in form, but they are generally well designed, and not unfrequently ornamented. As examples we have engraved three from the collection at Stackallen, but there are many specimens, and several of great beauty, in the Royal Irish Academy. The most

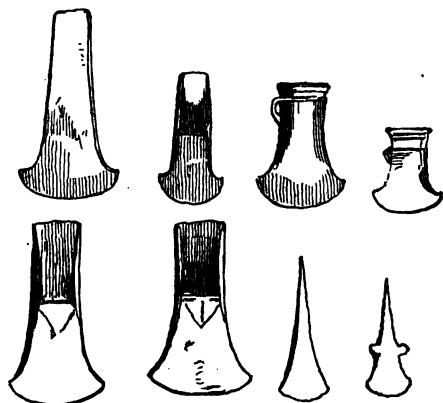
common weapon in use among the ancient inhabitants of Ireland appears to have been a kind of axe, now generally called a celt. Its material is bronze, and it appears to have been used contemporaneously with swords and spear-heads, of which we have just given examples. The celt is rarely more than seven inches in length, and several have been preserved which measure scarcely an inch and a half. There are



No. 2. Spear-heads.

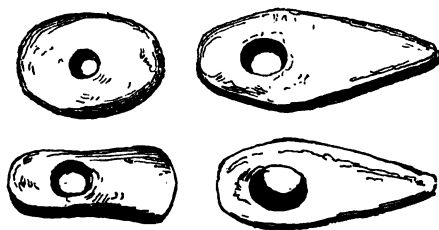
two kinds: the most common is flat and wedge-shaped, and appears to have been fixed by its smaller end in a wooden handle; the other is hollow, and furnished with a small loop upon one side (see cut 3), through which, it is supposed, a string, securing it to the handle, anciently passed. Ancient moulds of sandstone, used in the casting of swords, spear-heads, and celts, such as we have described, have often been found in Ireland.

The museum also contains a fine collection of stone hatchets, arrow and spear heads, and knives



No. 3. Celts.

of flint, besides a variety of other articles of stone belonging to a very remote and unknown period.



No. 4. Stone Hammers.

Stone weapons have frequently been found in every county in Ireland; but in Ulster especially

they are very common. The engravings represent a variety of the stone hammers, and of arrow and spear heads.



No. 5. Arrow and Spear Heads.

There are also in the collection a considerable number of sepulchral urns, several of which may challenge comparison with any hitherto discovered in Great Britain. Our first illustration represents an urn of stone said to have been brought from the mound of Nowth (see page 31), in



Stone Urn from Nowth.

the county of Meath. Its sides are sculptured with representations of the sun and moon, but otherwise it is not remarkable in its decorations. The dimensions of this urn are,—depth, nine inches, breadth across the mouth, nine inches and a half, and it is about one foot in height.

Our second example, from a grave at Kilmurry, was presented to the Academy by Thomas Black, Esq. It measures five inches across the mouth, and four in depth, and is formed, as usual, of clay.



Urn from a Grave at Kilmurry.

The urn represented in the annexed cut was found in the rath of Donagare, in the county of Antrim. It is ornamented in a manner somewhat unusual. The Museum contains several other urns quite perfect, and many fragments variously ornamented, and of great interest; but as the space which we can devote to remains of this class is necessarily limited, we are reluctantly obliged to leave them unnoticed.



Urn from the Rath of Donagare.

Among the bronze antiquities, several horns or trumpets, of great size, are remarkable. That they were manufactured by the same ancient people by whom the celts and other brazen weapons were used, there cannot now be a doubt, though Led-

wich, Beaufort, and other writers, have assigned them to the Danes. Many specimens have, from time to time, been discovered in this country. There is a record of ten or twelve having been found together in a bog in the county of Cork. We are told by ancient writers that the Gauls and other Celtic nations were in the habit of using horns and trumpets to increase the din of battle, and it is more than probable that the horns so often found in Ireland, a country rich in Celtic antiquities generally, are of the kind alluded to. A bare enumeration of the various weapons, ornaments, vessels, &c., of the Pagan era, which are preserved in the Academy, and which, it may be remarked, exhibit in their workmanship a degree of excellence generally in proportion to their antiquity, would occupy a greater space than the limits assigned to this notice will allow. Therefore, in order to afford the reader an insight to the character of the collection generally, we shall pass at once to objects of the early Christian period, a class of antiquities in which the Academy is also rich. Among these the ancient quadrangular bells of iron or bronze are, perhaps, not the least interesting. Bells appear to have been used in Ireland as early as the time of St. Patrick. They are mentioned in the lives of most of the early saints, in the Annals of the Four Masters, and in other ancient compositions. Cambrensis, in

his Welsh Itinerary, says, that both the laity and clergy in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, held in such veneration certain portable bells, that they



Bell of Armagh.

were much more afraid of swearing falsely by them than by the Gospels, "because of some hidden and miraculous power with which they were gifted, and by the vengeance of the saint to whom they were particularly pleasing, their despisers and transgressors were severely punished."* The bells so highly revered by the Irish during the middle ages had

* See Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy.

severally belonged to some one of the early founders of Christianity in this island, and had been preserved, from the time of the saint, in a monastery which he had originally founded, or elsewhere in the custody of an hereditary keeper.

In like manner the pastoral crooks and crosiers, which had belonged to the early fathers of the Irish Church, appear to have been regarded as holy. Notwithstanding the frequent pillage of Church property by the Danes, and the unsparing destruction of "superstitious" relics during a comparatively late period, numerous examples, remarkable for the beauty of their decorations and the excellence of their workmanship, have been preserved to our own times. There is scarcely any variety in the form of the early crooks; they are simply curved, like those used by shepherds, but they usually exhibit a profusion of ornament, consisting of elaborately interwoven bands, terminating generally in serpents' heads, or in some equally singular device. In several specimens, settings formed of stones, or an artificial substance variously coloured, occur, but this is supposed to indicate a comparatively recent date. A visitor to the Academy may inspect several examples remarkable as well for their extreme beauty, as for the excellent state of preservation in which they remain.

The Cross of Cong, the gem of the Academy

collection, affords most striking evidence of the advancement which the Irish artificers had made in several of the arts, and in general manufacturing



Cross of Cong.

skill, previous to the arrival of the English. It was made at Roscommon, by native Irishmen, about the

year 1123, in the reign of Turlogh O'Connor, father of Roderick, the last monarch of Ireland, and contains what was supposed to be a piece of the true cross, as inscriptions in Irish, and Latin in the Irish character, upon two of its sides, distinctly record: see Irish Grammar, by J. O'Donovan, page 234. The preceding illustration, which is from the pencil of Mr. Du Noyer, an artist whose power and accuracy, as an antiquarian draughtsman, have gained him well-merited distinction, will afford but a very general idea of the original, as the extremely minute and elaborate ornaments, with which it is completely covered, and a portion of which is worked in pure gold, could not possibly be expressed on so reduced a scale. The ornaments generally consist of tracery and grotesque animals, fancifully combined, and similar in character to the decorations found upon crosses of stone of about the same period. A large crystal, through which a portion of the wood which the cross was formed to enshrine is visible, is set in the centre, at the intersection.

The Academy owes the possession of this unequalled monument of ancient Irish art to the liberality of the late Professor Mac Cullagh, by whom it was purchased for the sum of one hundred guineas, and presented.

Among the more singular relics in the collection, a chalice of stone, the subject of the annexed wood-

cut, is well worthy of observation. Though formed of so rude a material, there is nothing in its general form, or in the character of its decorations, to warrant a supposition that it belongs to a very early period. Few chalices of an age prior to the twelfth century remain in Ireland, and any of a later period which have come under the observation of the writer are not very remarkable. A chalice of silver found in the ruins



of Kilmallock Abbey, was melted some years

Stone Chalice in the Collection of the Royal Irish Academy.

ago by a silversmith of Limerick, into whose hands it had fallen. Cups of stone appear not to have been uncommon among the Irish. An ancient vessel of that material, of a triangular form, remains, or very lately remained by the side of a holy well in Columbkil's Glen, in the county of Clare, and another was found last year in the county of Meath, near the ruins of Ardmulchan Church.

The copies of the Gospels, and other sacred

writings, which had been used by the early saints of Ireland, were generally preserved by their successors, enclosed in cases formed of yew, or some wood equally durable. Many of those cases were subsequently enshrined, or enclosed in boxes of silver, or of bronze richly plated with silver, and occasionally gilt; and in several instances a third case appears to have been added. Sir William Betham, in his *Irish Antiquarian Researches*, describes several of those evidences of early Irish piety, still extant, and remaining in a high state of preservation. They are the Caah, or Cathach, the Meeshac, and the Leabhar Dhimma.

The Caah, which has been lately deposited in the Museum of the Academy, is a box about nine inches and a half in length, eight in breadth, and two in thickness, formed of brass plates, rivetted one to the other, and ornamented with gems and chasings in gold and silver. It contains, as usual, a rude wooden box, "enclosing a MS. on vellum, a copy of the ancient Vulgate translation of the Psalms, in Latin, consisting of fifty-eight membranes." This MS. there is every reason to believe was written by the hand of St. Columba, or Columbkille, the Apostle of the Northern Picts, and founder of an almost incredible number of monasteries in Ireland, his native country.

A glance at the decoration displayed upon the

top of the box will convince the critical antiquary of the comparatively late date of this portion of the relic. The top is ornamented with a silver plate, richly gilt, and divided into three compartments by clustered columns supporting arches. The central space is somewhat larger than the others, and contains the figure of an ecclesiastic, probably St. Columba, who is represented in a sitting posture, giving the benediction, and holding a book in his left hand. The arch of this compartment is pointed, while the others are segmental. The space to the right of the centre is occupied by the figure of a bishop or mitred abbot, giving the benediction with his right hand, while in his left he holds the staff. The compartment to the left of the central division contains a representation of the Passion. There are figures of angels with censers over each of the side arches. A border, within which the whole is enclosed, is formed at the top and bottom of a variety of fabulous animals; the sides represent foliage, and in each angle there is a large rock crystal. A fifth setting of crystal, surrounded with smaller gems, occurs immediately over the figure, which was probably intended to represent St. Columba. The sides and ends of the box are also richly chased. An inscription in the Irish character, upon the bottom, desires "a prayer for Cathbar O'Donell, by

whom the cover was made," and for Sitric, the grandson of Hugh, who made * * *

The Caah appears to have been handed down from a very early period in the O'Donell family, of which Saint Columba, the supposed writer of the manuscript which it was made to enshrine, was a member. The Domnach Airgid, also preserved in the Academy, is perhaps the most precious relic of the kind under notice now remaining in the country, as it contains, beyond a doubt, a considerable portion of the copy of the Holy Gospels which were used by Saint Patrick during his mission in Ireland, and which were presented by him to Saint Macarthen. Unfortunately, the membranes of which this singularly interesting manuscript is composed, have, through the effects of time and neglect, become firmly attached to each other; but as several have been successfully removed from the mass, it is to be hoped that the whole may yet be examined.

Dr. Petrie, in a valuable paper upon the Domnach Airgid, published in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, has described the manuscript as having three distinct covers: the first, and most ancient, of wood—yew; the second of copper, plated with silver; and the third of silver, plated with gold. The outer and least ancient cover possesses many features in common with that

of the Caah, though it is probably of an age somewhat later. The plated box enclosing the original wooden case is of very high antiquity. See Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. xx.

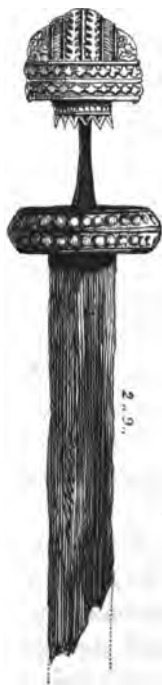
While our public and private museums abound in antiques formed of stone, earthenware, glass, bronze, and even of the precious metals, few relics of an early age composed of iron or steel have been found in a state of preservation sufficient to render them of value to the antiquary as evidences relative to the taste, habits, or manufacturing skill of the people or period to which, from their peculiarities, they might be referred. This may in a great measure be attributed to an opinion generally received, that iron is incapable of resisting decomposition for any length of time when buried in the earth, or exposed to atmospheric influences. To a certain extent the fallacy of this supposition has of late been proved by the discovery, at Loch Gabhair, near Dunshaughlin, and elsewhere, of a considerable number of weapons, &c. &c., of iron, which there is every reason to refer to a period not later than the eleventh century, and which are here found in connexion with articles of bronze and bone, chased and carved in a style peculiar to a period at least antecedent to the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. The Academy museum contains many specimens of swords, axes, and spear-

heads, besides many antiques of a less obvious character, found at Dunshaughlin. Their preservation may be attributed to the fact of their having been buried among an immense quantity of bones, the decomposition of which, by forming a phosphate of lime, admitted but of a partial corrosion of the metal. There are also a number of swords and other weapons found near Island-bridge by labourers engaged in clearing the ground upon which the terminus of the Dublin and Cashel railway now stands. Their preservation is not easily to be accounted for, unless it be shewn that the earth in which they were found contains a peculiar anticorrosive property, as, although some bones were also found, their number was insufficient to warrant a supposition that their presence had in any remarkable degree affected the nature of the soil. The swords are long and straight, formed for cutting as well as thrusting, and terminate in points formed by rounding off the edge towards the back of the blade. The hilts are very remarkable in form, and in one or two instances are highly ornamented, as in the example given upon the next page. The mountings were generally of a kind of brass, but several richly plated with silver were found, and it is said that one of the swords had a hilt of solid gold. The spears are long and slender, and similar in form to the lance-heads used in some

of the cavalry corps. The axe-heads are large and plain, and were fitted with wooden handles, which, as might be expected, have long since decayed. A number of iron knobs of a conical form, measuring in diameter about four inches, were also found. They are supposed to have been attached as bosses to wooden shields, of which they are the only remains.

All these weapons, with one exception, are composed of a soft kind of iron. Many of the swords were found doubled up, a circumstance for which it is difficult to assign a reason, as they had evidently been purposely bent. The sword represented in the engraving is remarkable for the unusual degree of ornament which appears upon its hilt, and also for its material, steel.

From several circumstances relative to the neighbourhood in which these remains were found, as well as from certain peculiarities in their form and character, our most judicious antiquaries have been almost unanimous in pronouncing them



Sword found in digging for the Cashel Railway.

Danish; and their opinion was fully borne out by that expressed by the celebrated Danish antiquary, Warsaae, during his visit to Dublin in the beginning of this year.

Several axe-heads, discovered with many other antiques of various periods in the bed of the Shannon, and presented to the Academy by the Commissioners, are generally supposed to be Norman; but they are quite as likely to have been used



Axe from the Bed of the Shannon.

by the Irish, with whom the axe was a favourite weapon.

Giraldus Cambrensis, in the reign of King John, thus speaks of the power with which the Irish of his time were wont to wield the battle-axe: "They hold the axe with one hand, not with both, the thumb being stretched along the handle, and directing the blow, from which neither the helmet erected into a cone can defend the head, nor the iron mail the rest of the body; whence it happens that in our times the whole thigh (*coxa*) of a soldier, though ever so well cased in iron mail, is cut

off by one blow of the axe, the thigh and the leg falling on one side of the horse, and the dying body on the other."—Given by John O'Donovan, in his account of the battle of Clontarf, Dublin Penny Journal, vol. i.

In conclusion we may remark, that a few hours' examination of the truly national collection of antiquities preserved in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy alone, will afford an inquirer a more correct knowledge of the taste, habits, and manufacturing skill of the ancient Irish, than may be obtained by mere reading, even should he devote years, instead of days, to the attainment of his object.

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THE END.

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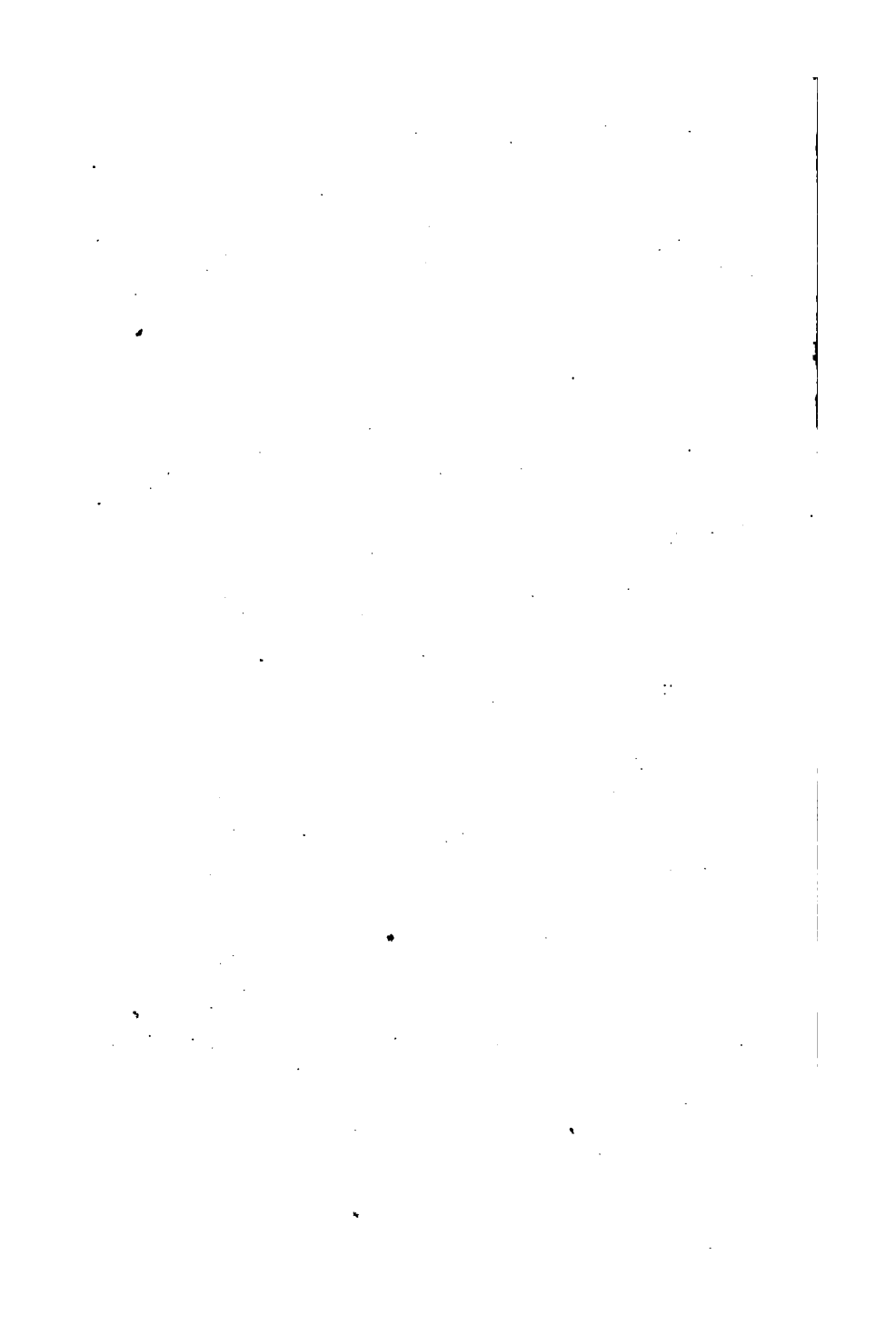
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